

The Seven Deadly Chess Sins, Jonathan Rowson (Gambit 2000)

Think Like a Grandmaster, Alexander Kotov (Batsford 1994 – New edition)

Training for the Tournament Player, Mark Dvoretsky and Artur Yusupov (Batsford)

Understanding the Sacrifice, Angus Dunnington (Everyman 2002)

Periodicals and Databases

Chessbase Megabase 2002

Schacknytt

Chess Informant

The Week in Chess

INTRODUCTION

When I wrote *Excelling at Chess* about a year and a half ago I was sure that nobody would want to read it. It turns out I was wrong. The book is (thus far) clearly my best-selling work. I also suffered from other forms of insecurity. I had some ideas that I thought to be correct, but my beliefs in myself were limited and I had yet to test these ideas with substantial material. In other words, I was afraid of having adjusted the results to the ideas, instead of having drawn the ideas from the empirical material. This was one of the main catalysts in starting the positional exercises program. I wanted to pick a wide variety of examples of a positional or tactical nature and expose them to critical study. Over the more than a year that the program ran I became sure that I was right in my ideas – even more so than I had believed. I could see it in my own games and in the games of my students.

This book is a product of ‘post-Excelling’ thinking. In many ways it is a remake, and in many ways it is a quite

different book. In *Excelling at Chess* I came with fundamental arguments and a number of different chapters focussed around thinking like a human instead of thinking like a computer, something I will discuss again below. In this book I have focussed on the method of abstract positional thinking. Most of the ideas are borrowed from *Excelling at Chess*, but here they are explained and used in a practical framework. My main aim has been to show the method in practice – not that I suggest an algorithm for solving positional exercises at the board, but because I suggest that the development of intuition and the general ability to play good positional chess can be learned by solving exercises in the right way. Of course there are many ways to study positional chess, and solving exercises is only one of them. My claim is that it is a smart method as you get used to thinking positionally. The exercises in this book should be enough for you to advance from struggling in the dark to making strong positional evaluations at the

board.

But this is not just a workbook, of course. The chapters lead the way and the exercises are the path. In the exercises I have discussed issues that I felt required the most attention, being not the only considerations in positional chess, but nevertheless central – and not particularly well described in other sources. There are issues about which I could have written independent chapters – prophylactic thinking is one such example, but I feel that this is a rather complex concept and players ready to deal with this are also ready for the books by Dvoretsky/Yusupov (*Positional Play and Training for the Tournament Player* in particular). And why repeat what Mark has written there? Additionally I could have included a chapter on ‘missing bishops’, a concept I have a great affection for, but I felt that it was too marginal compared with the rest of the book.

There are three initial ways to deal with a chess position.

The first is, simply, calculation. If I do this, then he does that. Then I answer thus and he will be shaking like a leaf in fear.

The second is intuition: Okay, what do we have here? I don't know, I think I will just play this. Finally there is abstract thinking: It seems like I should develop – where does this piece belong? Hmm, maybe my knight will get stuck on the edge of the board and not take part in the game for some time. Perhaps I should exchange rooks...

Of course all three ways of thinking exist all the time in our minds. But to what degree? Some players are very in-

tuitive. Tal and Capablanca were well known for this. They did not thoroughly examine the positions but played on feeling and imagination. Tal's sacrifices were often incorrect and players like Polugaevsky and Korchnoi made it a habit to find a flaw in Tal's ideas through deep calculation. Alekhine found that Capablanca was a better chess player than he, and also found that when Capablanca was in his element, the endgame, he became lazy and stopped working. Consequently Alekhine ended up beating Capablanca in the technical phase. Capablanca relied too much on intuition while Alekhine, who had no world class intuition, worked hard at the board and solved the problems with the aid of calculation and logic.

The perfect chess player would have an adjustable balance between all these three facets of his talent. In complex tactical positions he would use some intuition and some logic to deduct the candidates moves, after which there would follow calculation. In technical positions he would take into account natural technical considerations and adhere to general guidelines, adjusted with short lines of blunder checks. This is what is normally called positional chess. A good example is the following game.

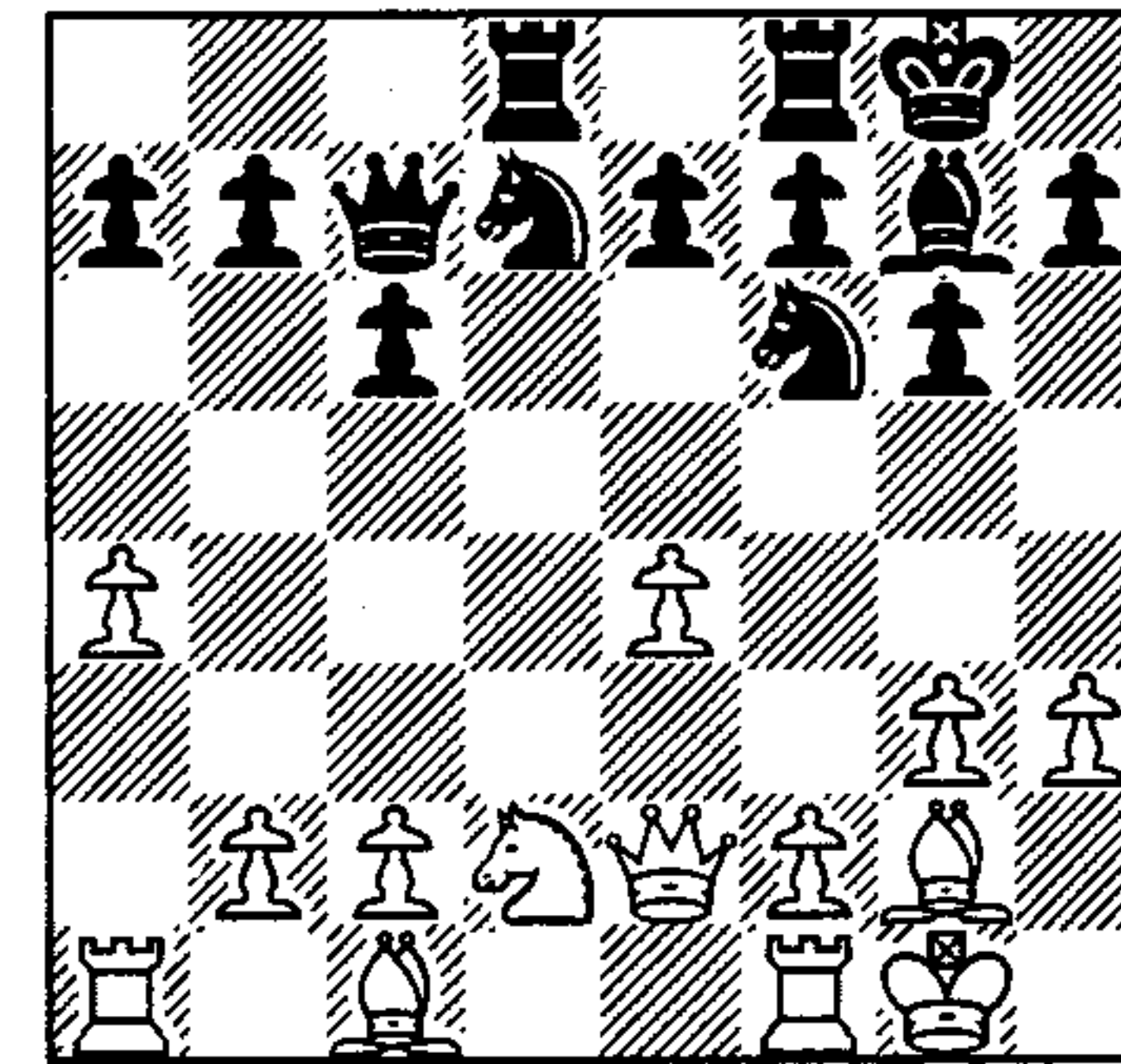
Fischer-Ibrahimoglu

Siegen 1970

Caro-Kann Defence

1 e4 c6 2 d3 d5 3 ♘d2 g6 4 ♘gf3 ♙g7 5 g3 ♘f6 6 ♙g2 0-0 7 0-0 ♙g4 8 h3 ♙xf3 9 ♚xf3 ♘bd7 10

♚e2 dxe4 11 dxe4 ♚c7 12 a4 ♜ad8



This is a position that is difficult to calculate. A general plan must be formed and executed. To do so one has to take all kinds of elements into consideration. For a strong player like Fischer, finding the key to the position was probably rather quick. But for the less experienced, juniors, club players and hopeless IMs like myself, a positional analysis will be of great help. Here a comparison of pieces as well as a search for ideal squares will explain Fischer's treatment. It turns out that the c1-bishop belongs on e3, that f2-f4 will not generate an attack but rather create weaknesses in the white camp; White's knight would like to get to d6 at some point – if Black plays ...e7-e5. It appears that there is little scope indeed for Black to better his position. Only the knights can be improved and they need to use c5 as a trampoline on their way to e6 and d4 (the ideal square). As White's knight is not ideal on c4, and as any rook to d1 would serve only to invite the rook to leave f8, the following organisation of White's forces is logical: 13 ♘b3!

This is, by the way, prophylaxis.

Black has only one reasonable move, and it is prevented. Simultaneously White progresses with his own slow improvement of his position.

13...b6 14 ♙e3 c5 15 a5 e5

Black is putting all his pawns on dark squares, inevitably causing the light squares to be severely weakened. Now White's worst placed piece is no longer the bishop on e3, rather the knight. Therefore the manoeuvre aimed at d5 is very logical.

16 ♘d2 ♙e8 17 axb6 axb6 18 ♘b1! ♚b7 19 ♘c3 ♘c7

Black has organised a modest defence on the light squares and is about to gain counterplay of sorts with ...b6-b5. A quick comparison of pieces reveals that the knight is the least valuable of White's minor pieces (the bishop on g2 has enormous potential from c4, d5 and h3) and that the knight on c7 is the most valuable for Black. Therefore an exchange is not illogical. At the same time the grip on the light squares and the prevention of ...b6-b5 are issues. Therefore Fischer played:

20 ♘b5!!

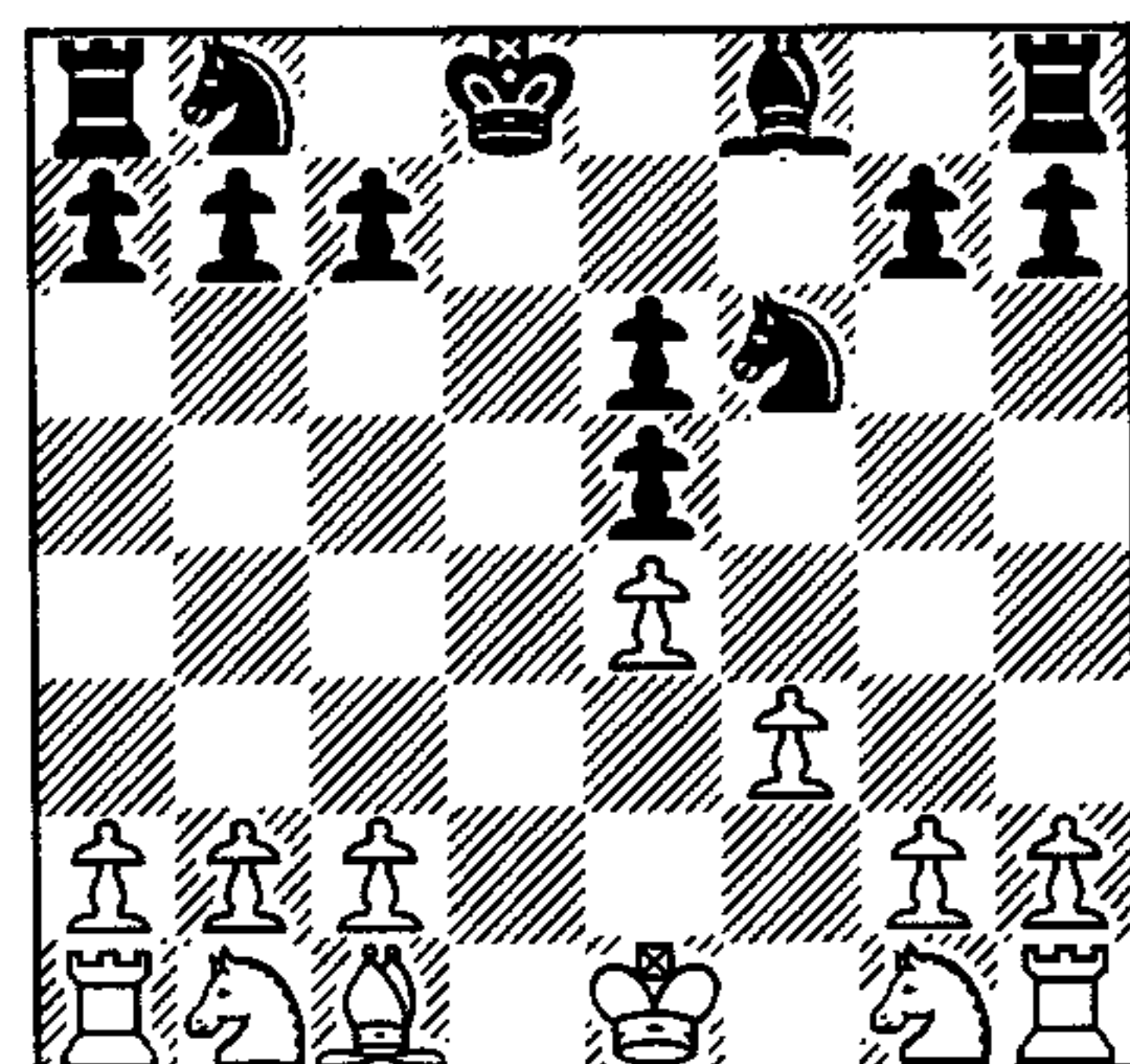
From here on it is pure power play. White's knight might have been better than its counterpart on c7 but the superiority of the remaining pieces is enormous, and that is what counts on the scoreboard.

20...♚c6 21 ♘xc7 ♚xc7 22 ♚b5 ♜a8 23 c3 ♜xa1 24 ♜xa1 ♜b8 25 ♜a6 ♙f8 26 ♙f1 ♙g7 27 ♚a4 ♜b7 28 ♙b5 ♘b8 29 ♜a8 ♙d6 30 ♚d1 ♘c6 31 ♚d2 h5 32 ♙h6+ ♙h7 33 ♙g5 ♜b8 34 ♜xb8 ♘xb8 35 ♙f6 ♘c6 36 ♚d5 ♘a7 37 ♙e8 ♙g8 38 ♙xf7+ ♚xf7 39 ♚xd6 1-0

It is clear that calculation could not have brought you any success in this game, yet calculation is what many players would have used to try to solve these problems. To learn to use the right tools at the right moment is an important part of excelling at chess. In this book the main part of the exercises are quite positional. We often find ourselves in situations where we need to solve positional questions, but where calculation plays an important part; we set positional goals and use tactics to implement them, or alternatively we have to look out for tactics in one way or another.

In modern day chess at the top a player's mood tends to be aggressive, leading to a search for more complicated types of positions. In fact chess changed considerably when Kasparov arrived on the scene, and again when computers began to 'comment' on the elite players' performances in analysis rooms and bedrooms all over the world. Kasparov introduced the initiative as a much more important part of positional chess than was previously understood, and the computers made us pay more attention to the benefits of concrete analysis. Some commentators, like John Watson, have made the 'misassumption' that this has made the lessons of yesterday to some extent irrelevant. His notion of rule independence seems to be a little flawed. In his book *Secrets of Modern Chess Strategy* he tries to argue that, in the old days, the top players followed some rules in a rigid way, whilst today they use calculation and the magic of intuition, which is a result of heavy exposure.

Let us take an example from John's book.



White to play

Here Yusupov played **8 ♘h3**. Watson writes: 'Don't put your knights on the rim! Well, knights are living on the edge these days, as we shall see in chapter 5. But the case before us is really simple. Neither side is about to make any dramatic pawn-breaks, so there is plenty of time to manoeuvre pieces to their best posts. In the case before us, that would involve the knight going to d3 via f2; where would it go from e2? As McDonald points out, ♘f2-d3 could be followed by ♘d2-c4 and ♙c1-d2-c3 with a three-way attack on the forward e-pawn.'

Now what is wrong with this? Most of it is nothing but correct. It is clear abstract thinking, and very sound. The problem is this thing about knights on the rim. In his chapter 5, where the knights live on the rim, they only do so as long as there is a concrete advantage. When the advantage disappears the knights race towards the centre. The same goes for this example. The knight in no way lives on the rim – it is going

towards the centre. I am sure that Tarrasch, who was not an idiot, would have no problems with this. He was one of the greatest chess players of his age, coming across as dogmatic. There is a story about a man who had put his rook behind a passed pawn, as prescribed by Tarrasch. His friends had then laughed at him. He mailed the position to Tarrasch and asked him whether or not he was right in following his advice. Tarrasch assured the man that the move played was good, and that in the future he would indeed do well to follow his advice. Only, in the given position, ♖e8 checkmate was a stronger move!

I believe that John is mistaken in his view on Tarrasch and the others as dogmatic people who did not think. Evidence (their games) suggests otherwise... The above diagram is a clear-cut situation of a knight not living on the edge but manoeuvring towards the centre in the most flexible way. If you understand the rule as not being allowed to put your knight on the edge of the board under any circumstances, then you are truly dogmatic, as well as stupid. And Tarrasch was not stupid. If, instead, we choose to understand it in terms of knights generally having less influence on the edge and greater power in the centre (which, according to Aagaard the linguist, is actually the most obvious semantic interpretation) then the above manoeuvre makes a lot of sense.

We might have a different view on how to treat the past, but we try to solve positional questions in a somewhat similar fashion.

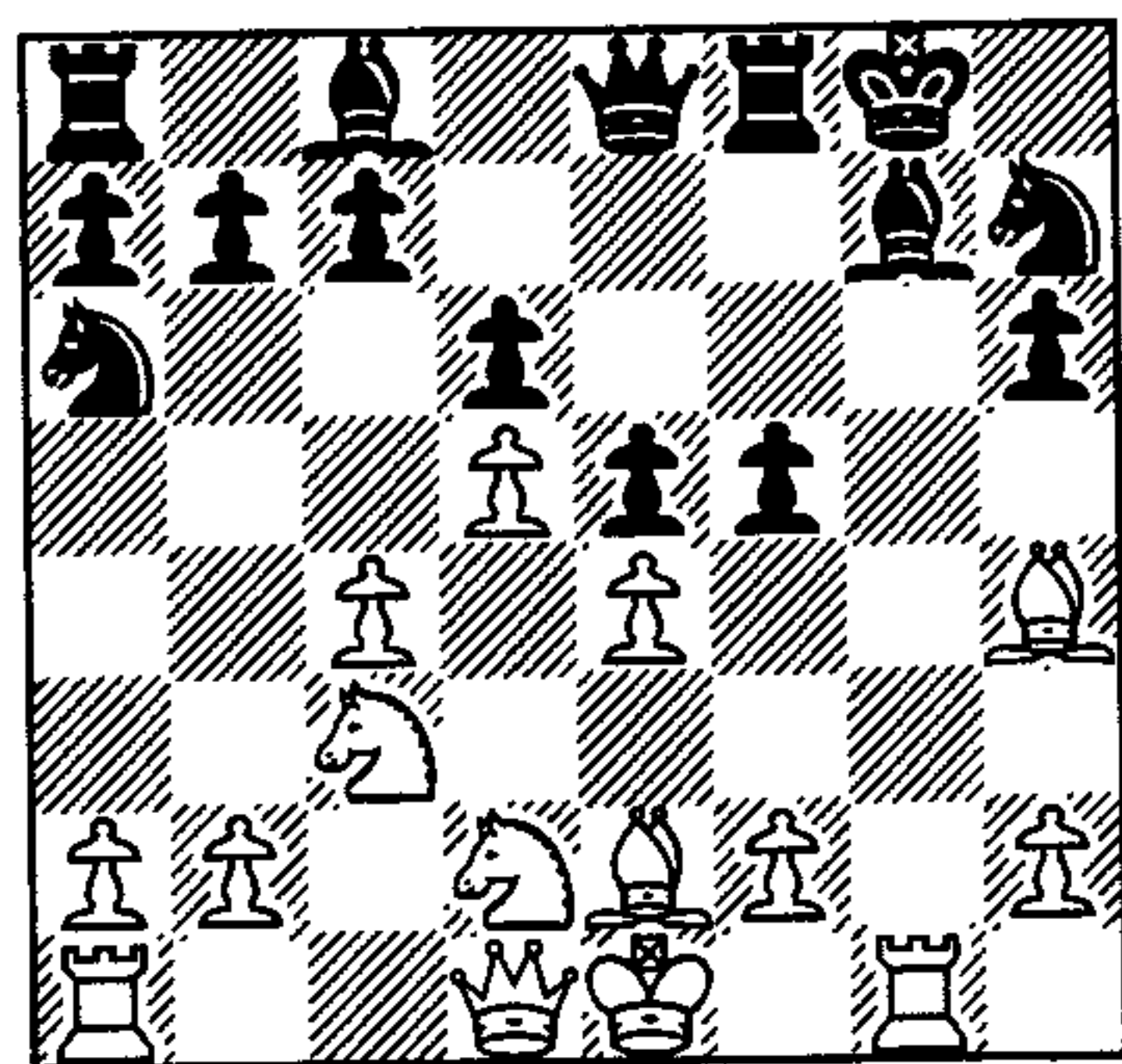
I have continuously praised *Secrets of*

Modern Chess Strategy as a great piece of work which does treat the enormous evolution there has been in positional understanding since 1935. It would be strange if the period from 1876-1935 had greater leaps in understanding than 1935-2003. It would be strange if some of the observations made by the old masters were not mistaken. John provided an excellent analysis of many new concepts in positional chess, and has been rightfully praised for it. But to claim that the paradigm of thinking has completely changed is going too far. Still, this is only one conclusion in John's book. And if you make up your own mind and take from John and from Jacob what you find useful and relevant, I am sure that my two books and his book will be able to teach you something.

I mentioned earlier that the internet program had given my pupils and I some tools that proved useful in over-the-board play. Some of these can be seen in the different articles in the book, but I would like to give an example from my most recent game and from three games from Ivo Timmermans' most recent tournament.

Høi-Aagaard Danish league 2003

Carsten Høi is Denmark's latest Grandmaster. Despite the fact that he could have received the title back in 1993, he was awarded the title only recently. The positions where I felt the usefulness of the line of thinking currently under discussion began after 13 moves:



Black to move

Here I used 25 minutes, trying to choose between the plans ... f6xe4 and ... c5xe4 , in both cases to make way for my bishop on c8. I was emotionally dissatisfied. I had the feeling that it had to be possible to play something less forcing, as both white knights have nowhere else to go than e4. Why should I help my opponent by opening the kingside? Finally I used the ideal squares technique and came up with the following manoeuvre.

13... f6 14 c2 h5 !

The f4-square is the weakest point in White's position. No pawn can ever control it (without Black's help) and the f2-pawn makes it inaccessible in similar fashion. Additionally the f4-square is a key factor in the fight for the light squares in White's camp. Carsten now saw lines like 15 0-0-0 f4 16 g3 xe2 17 xe2 h5 . It quickly turned out that after 18 dgl f7 19 f6 ! this line would win for White, but it was equally easy to find 17... f4 ! 18 gg1 ? h5 when Black wins a piece. White can apparently avoid losing material with 18 a3 h5 19 f3 c5 20

eg1 , but his position does not make a positive impression. Carsten eventually came up with a strong move, defending the f4-square in return for conceding the initiative.

15 g3 h8 16 0-0-0 b4 !

Again unable to find something useful, I make a slightly unusual move. I did not approve of 16... c5 17 b4 ? xe4 for the reasons given above (even though it does make more sense here), so I decided to simply harass his well placed queen. The knight still has c5 as an ideal square, but .. c5 with tempo, followed by ... a7-a5 , is nicer. Therefore after

17 b3

I simply returned with

17... a6 !

Carsten could also find nothing useful about having his queen on b3, so the game ended in a draw after

18 c2 b4 ½-½

Ivo Timmermans is a 42 year-old doctor (single and handsome, girls) with an Elo rating that has hovered around 2200 for centuries (at least two). He followed the training program from start to finish, missing occasional weeks due to tournaments, a heavy workload or new episodes of Friends. In his last tournament, the Rilton Cup in Stockholm, he illustrated much of the benefits gleaned from following the program, as well as the usefulness of solving combinations for an hour every day during the month before the tournament. The latter exercise is, in my opinion, an absolute must for the ambitious chess player. Not one hour per day, but a minimum of three to four sessions of

half an hour each week. Even I do it to keep sharp, and I no longer consider myself to be an ambitious player. I see it as exercise for the head, which holds the chess player's muscles, just as arms and legs carry the muscles of other athletes.

Anyway, here are a few positions from Ivo's games, annotated by the man himself:

Gleizerov-Timmermans

Stockholm 2002

Catalan

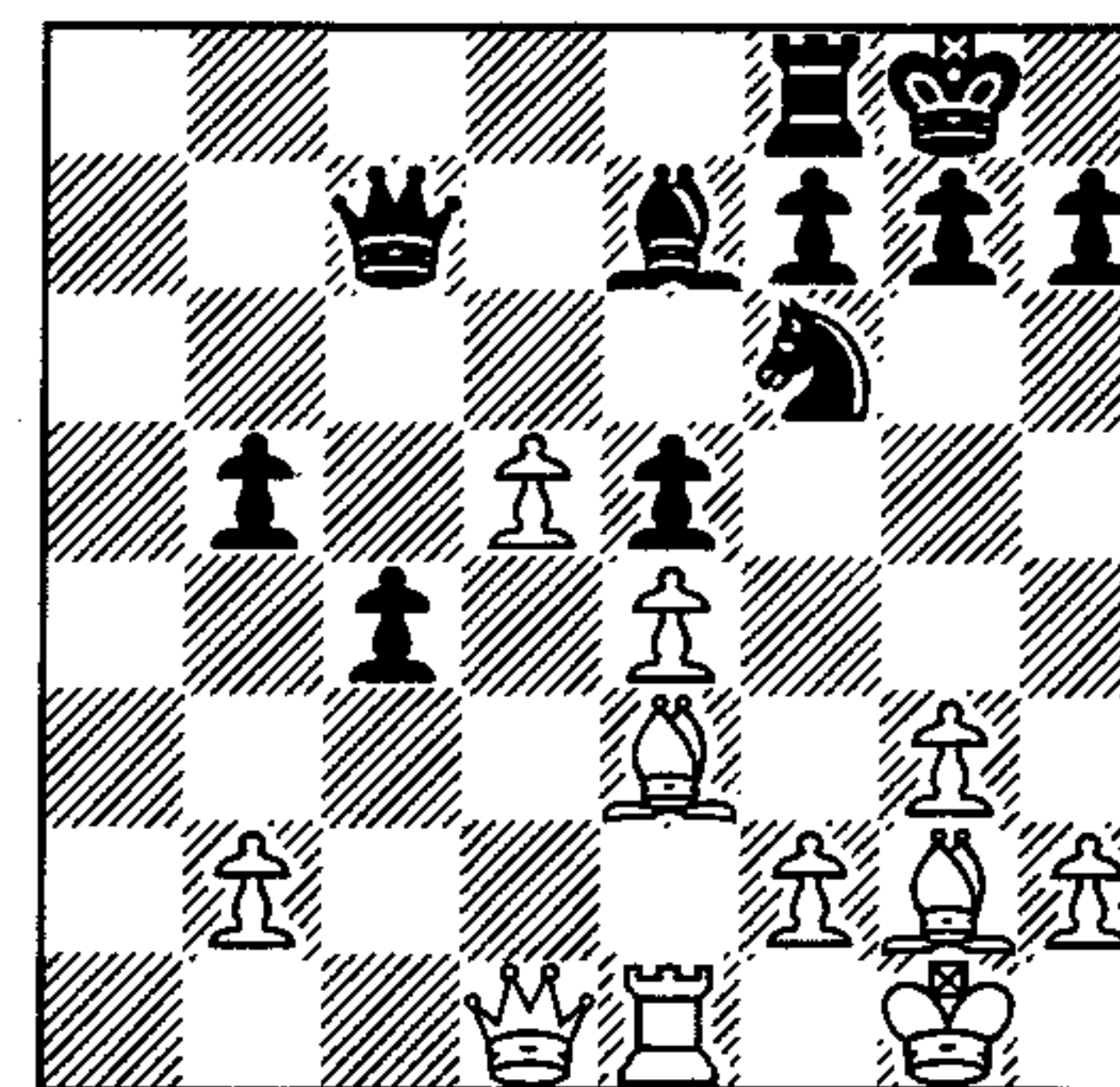
1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 f3 f6 4 c3 e6 5 g3 dxc4 6 g2 b5 7 e5 d5 8 a4 a6 9 axb5 cxb5 10 xb5 axb5 11 xa8 b7 12 a7

After the game Gleizerov was disappointed not to have played 12 a1 with a near decisive advantage.

13... b6 13 xb7 xb7 14 0-0 e7 15 e4 f6 16 d5 c7 17 g4

Later we found that 17 f3 ! would have given White a clear advantage. It is all about the light squares.

17... bd7 18 e1 0-0 19 f4 e5 20 xf6+ xf6 21 e3



Ivo explains: 'The positional charac-

teristics of the position are typical. The pawn structure favours White, who has a defended passed pawn on d5. Black has dynamic chances because he has the pawn majority on the queenside; Black should be careful here as advancing the pawns can create weaknesses. The only open file is the a-file. White has the bishop pair yet the position is static and closed and the d6-square seems ideal for the knight. Black plans the manoeuvre ... e8-d6 but exchanging dark-squared bishops with ... c5 is also an excellent idea, weakening the dark squares and making f2-f4 less attractive. The bishop trade also brings Black closer to the desired endgame of knight versus bad bishop (g2). The disadvantage of ... e8-d6 is that it temporarily locks in the rook on f8, and by the time Black is ready to activate the rook White controls the a-file, e.g. 21... e8 22 d2 c5 23 a1 with advantage. It is therefore logical to start improving the position of the rook and only then the minor pieces, thus prompting 21... a8 . This gives White something on which to ponder – 22 d2 and 22 c2 can be met with 22... g4 or 22... a2 .'

21... a8 22 f3 e8 23 c2 c5 24 b3 d6 25 bxc4 xe3 26 xe3 xc4 27 xc4 ½-½

The grandmaster offered a draw to avoid a worse fate.

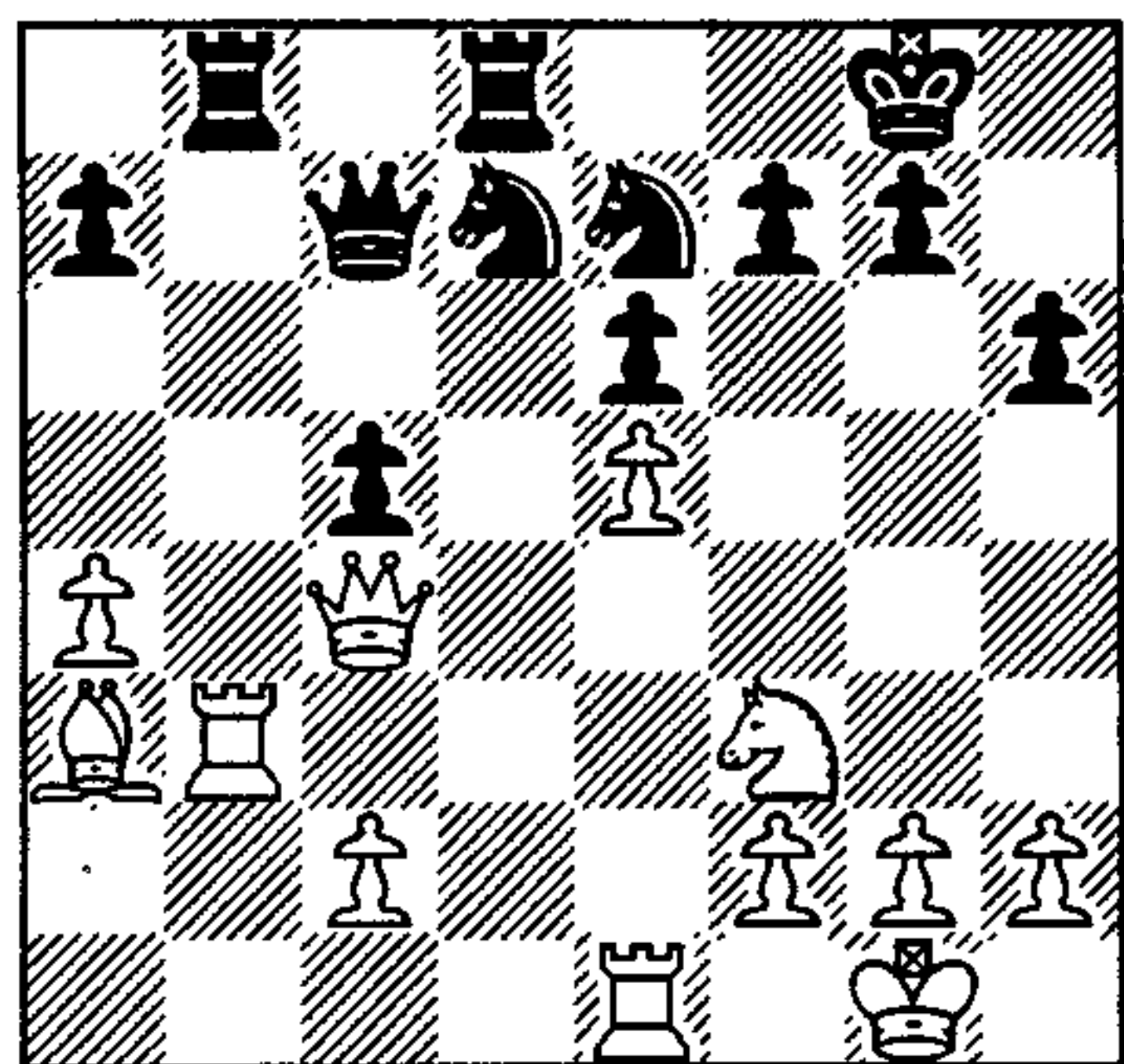
Timmermans-Ivanov

Stockholm 2002

French Defence

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 c3 b4 4 e5 e7 5 a3 xc3+ 6 bxc3 c5 7 f3 b6 8 a4 a6 9 xa6 xa6 10 0-0

h6 11 ♖e2 ♘b8 12 ♙a3 ♘d7 13 c4 dxc4 14 dxc5 bxc5 15 ♖xc4 0-0 16 ♙ab1 ♖c7 17 ♙fe1 ♙ab8 18 ♙b3 ♙fd8



In this position Ivo's next move made his opponent look at him in surprise. A low rated amateur is not supposed to make such deep moves. I have to say here that the knowledge of this plan comes from previous knowledge of the opening, and not positional exercises alone.

'After 18...♙fd8 White faces the choice as to what side of the board on which to play. Attempts to switch pieces to the kingside are frustrated because the e5-pawn has to be defended. White has to find a way to strengthen his position without disturbing the co-ordination between the pieces, and none of the pieces can be improved right now.'

19 h4!

'Squeezing Black on the kingside. White threatens h4-h5 (gaining space) and prevents all tricks connected with ...♘xe5 and ...♙d1.'

19...♘c6 20 ♙c3!

'A short move that puts pressure on c5. White has prevented ...♘a5 and, in

return, threatens ♙xc5. White has a small edge after 20...♘c6 21 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 22 ♖xc5 ♖xc5 23 ♙xc5.'

20...♖a5 21 ♙e4 ♙b1+ 22 ♙h2 ♘b4 23 ♙b3 ♙xb3 24 cxb3 ♘d5 25 h5 ♙b8 26 ♙e2 ♖c3 27 ♙c2 ♖xc4 28 ♙xc4 ♙xb3 29 ♙xc5 a5 30 ♙d6 ♘5b6 31 ♙c7 ♙b2 32 ♙a7 ♙xf2 33 ♙xa5 ♙a2 34 ♙c5?

34 ♙a7! ♙xa4 35 ♙xa4 ♘xa4 36 g4 would still have made a draw. Now Black is better.

34...♘xc5 35 ♙xc5 ♙xa4 36 ♙g3 ♘d5 37 ♙c8+ ♙h7 38 ♙b8 ♘f4 39 ♙b7 ♘xh5+ 0-1

Despite losing to the strong Russian grandmaster, Ivo was very pleased with his effort. His goal was not to score as many points against these guys as possible but to play as well as he could, enjoy playing and learn from stronger players. That this attitude will get him far in the long-term I have no doubts. The following game, from the sixth round, illustrates what he will be doing to his former equals in the not too distant future.

Johansson-Timmermans

Stockholm 2003

Sicilian Defence

1 e4 c5 2 c3 ♘f6 3 e5 ♘d5 4 d4 cxd4 5 ♘f3 ♘c6 6 cxd4 d6 7 ♙e2 g6 8 0-0 ♙g7 9 exd6 ♖xd6 10 ♘c3 ♘xc3 11 bxc3 0-0 12 ♘d2?! ♙d8 13 ♖b3 b6 14 ♙f3 ♙e6!

Black has achieved the better opening. The white pawns are weak and dominated.

15 ♖a4 ♙d5 16 ♙a3 ♖c7 17 ♙ac1?

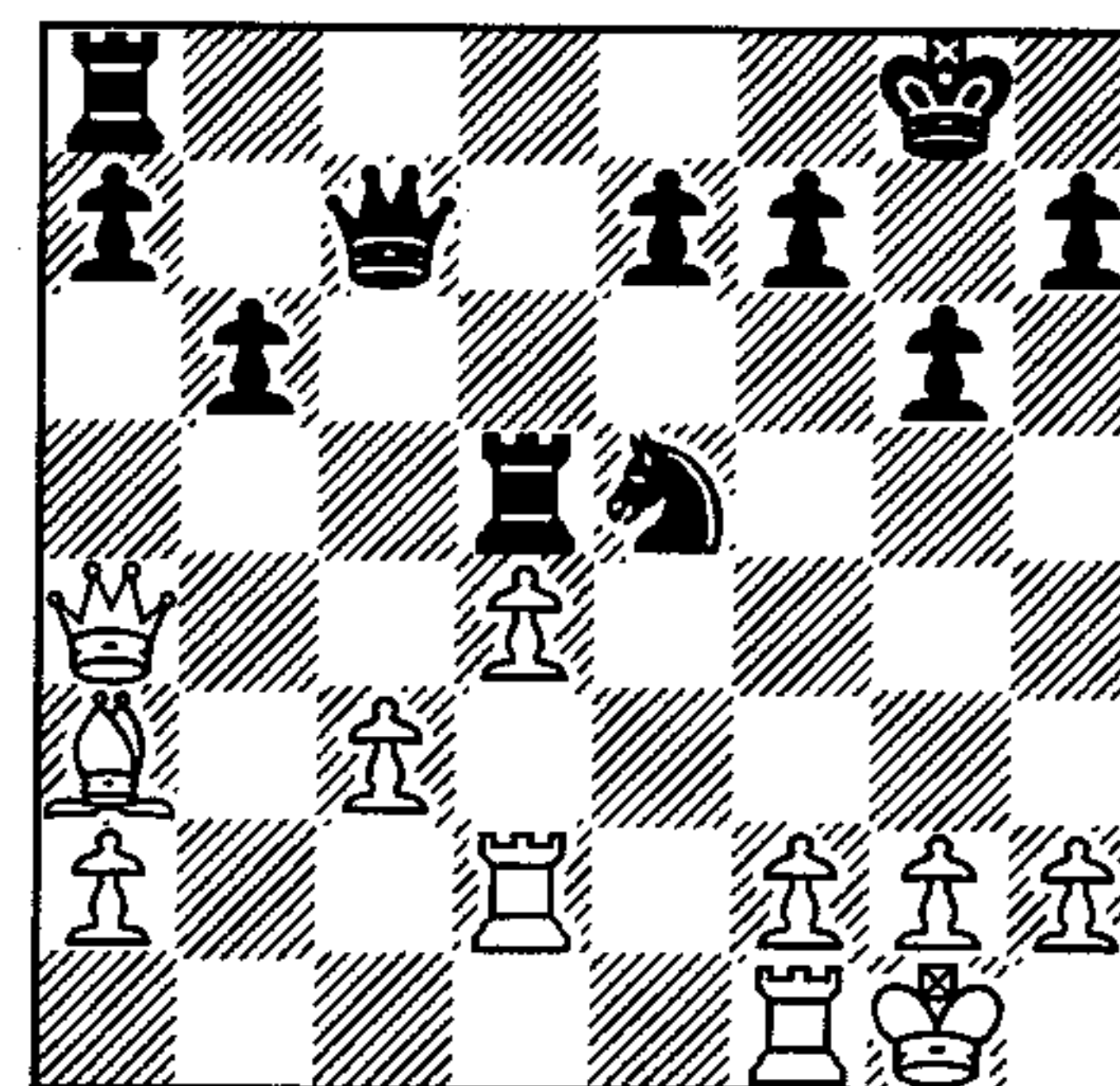
This rook move creates problems for White, although after 17 ♙fe1 he would be worse.

'Black has pressure against the pawns on c3 and d4, and if the pawns remain blocked for a while Black can play on the light squares c4 and d5. A solid move could be 17...♙ac8, completing development. However, the solution to the problem should be easier to find if we ask which pieces Black wants to exchange. In the most simplified version Black aims for a good knight versus bad (dark-squared) bishop ending. Hence Black wants to exchange light-squared bishops as well as the remaining bishop for White's knight. Any exchange of heavy pieces is also welcome, of course. Here Black can force matters with a subtle move.'

17...♙h6

'Threatening 18...♙xf3 ensures that the right pieces are removed from the board. After the forced sequence 18 ♙cd1 ♙xd2 19 ♙xd5 ♙xd5 20 ♙xd2 Black can chose between 20...♘e5 and 20...♘a5, gaining complete control over the light squares.'

18 ♙cd1 ♙xd2 19 ♙xd5 ♙xd5 20 ♙xd2 ♘e5!?



Later, when the initial excitement about this move faded, we discussed whether 20...♘a5, with a permanent positional advantage, was a reasonable alternative to this little combination (which seems to win a pawn, but no more).

21 f4?

As so often happens White cracks under the pressure of repeatedly being faced with new and unforeseen problems. The alternatives were as follows:

Black wins after 21 ♙e2 ♘f3+!! 22 gxf3 ♙g5+ 23 ♙h1 ♖f4 24 ♖c6 ♙h5 25 ♖xa8+ ♙g7, which leaves 21 ♙e1! ♖xc3 22 ♙b4 ♖c6 23 ♖b3 (23 ♖xc6 ♘xc6 24 ♙xe7 ♙e8 25 ♙de2 ♙xe7 26 ♙xe7 ♘xe7 27 ♙xe7 ♙xd4 28 ♙f1 ♙a4 and Black wins) 23...♘c4 24 ♙c2 ♙xd4 25 ♙xe7 a5 26 ♙e1 ♙e8 27 ♙ce2 ♙xe7 28 ♙xe7 ♙e4 29 ♙xe4 ♖xe4 with a clear advantage for Black.

21...♘c4 22 ♙c1

22 ♙e2 ♙a5 is the sad reality.

22...♘d2 23 ♙xd2 e6 24 g4 ♙c8 25 f5 gxf5 26 gxf5 ♙xf5 27 ♙xf5 exf5 28 ♖c2 ♖c6 29 ♖d3 ♖e4 0-1

This book is about abstract thinking, about understanding chess consciously. Intuition might work for some people who are exposed to a lot of chess positions, but I am of the belief that knowing why you should do what you should do is just as important. And especially for people who have reached a certain level and cannot seem to improve despite working extensively with tactics and openings, trying to get a deeper understanding of the game might be the way forward.

CHAPTER ONE

Simple Truths

In this chapter I want to talk about mistakes that are often committed but so obvious that, when you realise you are guilty of making them, you tend to underplay their importance. The first one is connected to simple evaluation technique.

I have a friend who is close to IM level; he is a really talented player with several norms and an ELO rating that is so close that two good games one day will make him an IM. Nevertheless he is violating one of the simplest rules of chess so often that even I noticed this as a weakness in his play. This is best illustrated with an example.

In one game he had an ending with three extra pawns, a lead in development and a clearly superior pawn structure. From then on he played rather carelessly. In order to exchange a few pieces he gave up a pawn, as well as the momentum of direct attack on the king. Later he just waited, resulting in his opponent gaining some activity for his pieces and, suddenly, a few threats. To protect himself my friend gave up an-

other pawn and found himself in a rook endgame, which was still winning. He concentrated well but overlooked something and the ending was drawn. After the game he would not hear of misplaying a winning position. He would have won had he simply made the correct choice on move 50!

Well, I often see people drift from comfortable winning positions into difficult winning positions when, suddenly, winning requires considerable effort. Chess becomes hard again.

There are very few people in the world who talk about bad positions we know we can draw in the way Kramnik did after his match with Kasparov. Most of us know that we are susceptible to making errors. We misplay our winning and drawn positions again and again. So in order to make it easy for ourselves we try to play accurately, even when we are three pawns up. We do not wait for the opponent to resign, but try to make him do so. Such an approach needs extra effort, but we get used to winning, rather than watching the op-

ponent losing. And sometimes we get a full point quickly because our opponent realises that we are not going to gradually let the victory slip away and, consequently, he tries something desperate.

The main mistake my friend committed was to decrease his level of concentration. Although he has sufficient presence of mind not to blunder, he still made enough inaccuracies for his position to go from easily winning, to winning and to drawn.

The following game is an antithesis to my friend's performance, where I concentrate right until to the end, making the most of my ability to concentrate (although the game can be said to be over straight out of the opening).

Greger-Aagaard

Danish League 2001

Sicilian Defence

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♗xd4 ♗f6 5 ♗c3 e5 6 ♗db5 d6 7 ♙g5 a6 8 ♗a3 b5 9 ♙xf6 gxf6 10 ♗d5 f5 11 ♙d3 ♙e6 12 ♖h5 ♙g7 13 c3 0-0!?

A sharp sideline but healthy enough.
14 exf5 ♙xd5 15 f6 e4 16 fxg7 ♖e8

Here White has a choice between ♙e2 and ♙c2, but he completely overlooked my intended response to 17 ♙xb5 and lost a piece.
17 ♙xb5?? ♖e5! 18 ♖h6 axb5 19 ♗xb5 ♙c4! 20 ♗a3

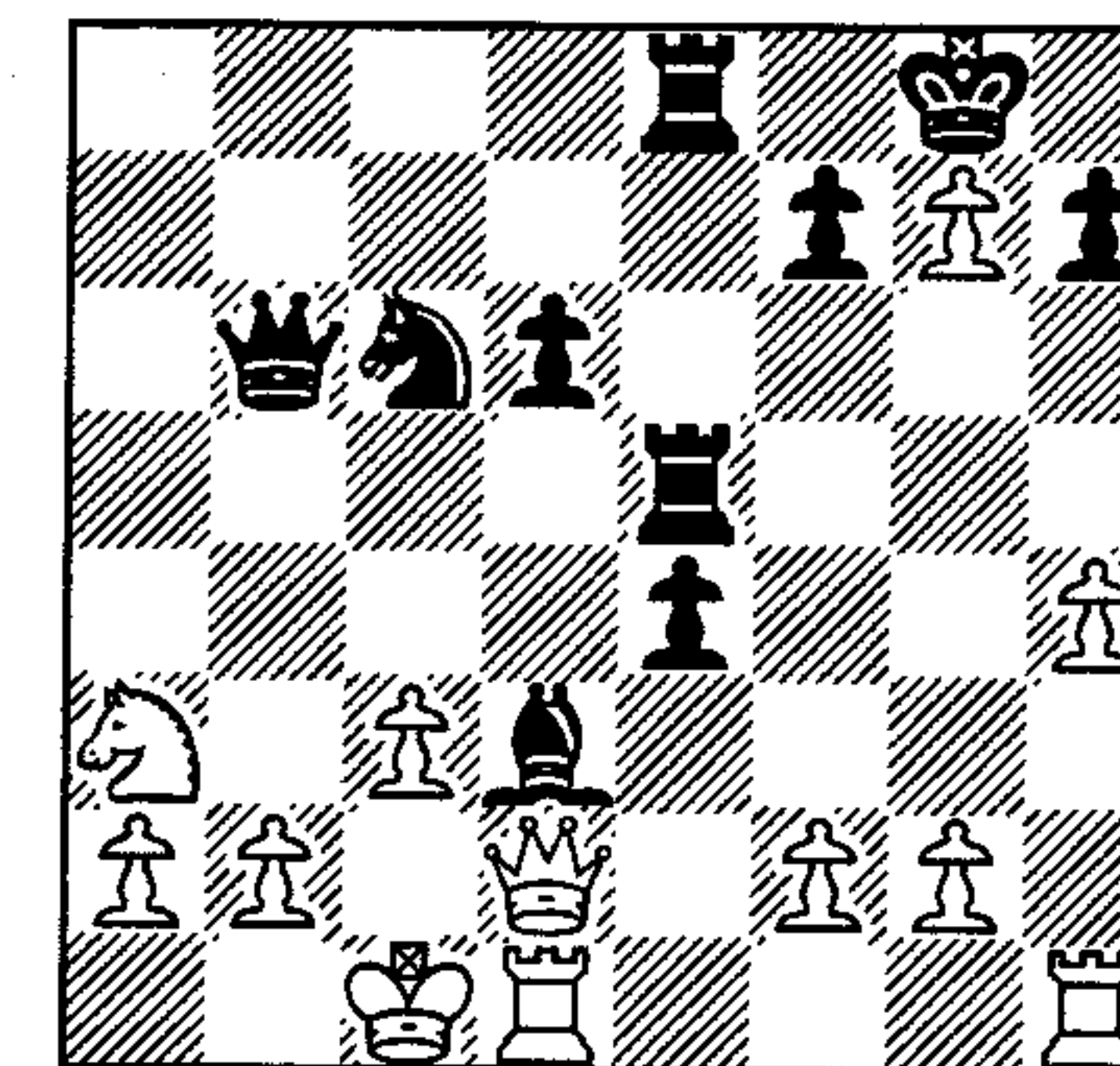
20 ♗d4 ♗xd4 21 cxd4 ♖g5! and ...♖a5+ will decide the game on the next move.

20...♙d3 21 h4 ♖b6 22 ♖d2

So far it has been easy for Black. I

concentrated only once and saw a two-move line. But now it is time to wrap up the full point and put it in the bag. Such a position might very well win by itself, but my lead in development should be enough to tear White's position apart. Now I chose to force him to castle queenside because I had seen a more or less forcing win.

22...♖ae8! 23 0-0-0



23 ♖h3 e3 24 ♖xd3 exf2+ 25 ♔d2 ♖xb2+ 26 ♗c2 ♖e1, when Black wins everything, was the tactical basis of my line. But what now? How to proceed?
23...♖b8!

23...♖a8 would probably have been the choice of many, as the threat ...♖xa3 would force White into 24 ♖e3, which loses the game after the exchange of queens. But I did not see any reason for my opponent to make it to an endgame. Not that I had any doubts whether or not I would win it, but I did not see it as the strongest option available for me. You can compare it to choosing between winning a pawn and a piece.

24 ♖h3 ♖a5! 25 ♖xd3 exd3 26 ♗c4 ♖b3!

26...♖xa2, of course, wins immediately, and then after 27 ♖xd3 comes

27...♖b3! with a direct win, as can be seen in the game. But I was focused and saw another way to decide the game.

27 ♖xd3 ♜xa2 28 ♞e1 ♔e5! 0-1

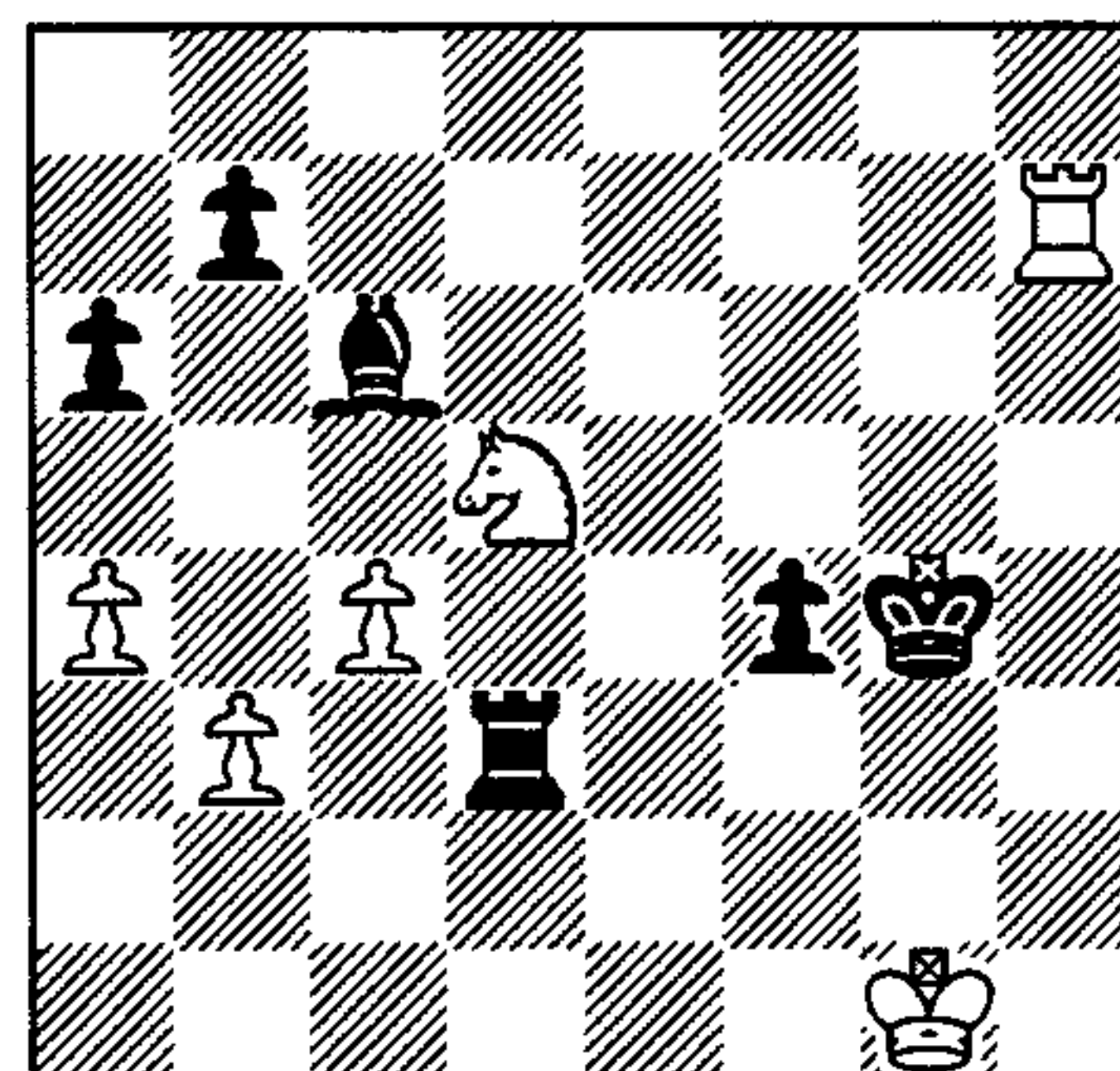
Obviously not a Beauty Prize game, although I am quite proud of it. I played two very nice moves (23...♞b8! and 26...♖b3!) and kept maximum concentration all through the game. However, it is not a game worth publishing anywhere – White just blundered a piece, as a pupil of mine pointed out (it should be said that this pupil does have a tendency to draw his winning positions...).

I once saw a game being played in Germany, Movsesian being White against Korchnoi in the final round of an open event. Movsesian had made 7½/8, while Korchnoi was on only 6½ points. The advantage of the first move saw Movsesian obtain a small advantage, and then he systematically made poor exchanges, leading to an endgame which he knew was drawn and which he drew. I am always impressed with this kind of confidence and control, but I still find it foolish in 99% of cases.

Recently a friend of mine had a winning knight(s) ending with a clear pawn up. Her king had a fast lane to the centre and she had fewer weaknesses than her opponent. But she used a lot of time trying to calculate a variation until the end; she thought she had succeeded but, somewhere in one of her sub-lines, she had overlooked something, and the resulting pawn ending was then losing instead of winning. I have seen this mistake being made many times, including in my own games. I have often tried to 'simplify' the technical task through

exchanges – as we learn to do when we grow up – but instead found that the task becomes more difficult. The turning point for me came in the following position in 1995 (after 42 ♘d5).

Jaksland-Aagaard
Denmark 1995



Here I considered playing 42...♞xd5 (as, I believe, many people would). The reasoning is simple: if the exchange is possible I have less pieces on the board and my pawn will count more. However, this is far from the truth. The reality is that the bishop on c6 is so much better than the knight on d5 that to trade these pieces would be terrible. White would also gain a passed pawn. To me this game was a kind of a breakthrough as I realised these things and afterwards saw them manifest themselves quite clearly with an easy win:

42...♞xb3 43 ♞g7+ ♔f3 44 ♞h7 ♞b1+ 45 ♔h2 ♞b2+ 46 ♔g1 ♞g2+ 47 ♔f1 ♞c2 48 ♞h3+ ♔g4 49 ♞c3 ♞xa4 50 ♞xc2 ♞xc2 51 ♔c5 ♔g3 52 ♔b4 ♞a4 53 ♔g1 ♞b5 0-1

I did not really realise what kind of rule was working here, but I do now. It is the same that counts in all the examples

mentioned above. You see, normally we are talking about chess positions as winning, clearly better, slightly better, equal, unclear, slightly worse and so on. But there are no real definitions of winning – because what is a winning position? Is it one you win 100% of the time, as my first Coach Henrik Mortensen tried to convince me, or is it a position where you can prove a win as I read it in Informator? Well, if I was interested in opening theory as an independent discipline, and not as something that helps me in my practical efforts, I would perhaps still have the same definition as Informator. But I don't. I believe Henrik is correct. You should consider a position to be winning only when you have no doubt whatsoever that you are going to win it. In the first example of this section my friend went from a winning position to great winning chances to draw because he did not realise one simple thing.

The choice of moves should not be made on an exact verdict of the final position, but on whether or not your position has improved or worsened.

This might seem obvious to the point of being naive, but for many players this 'theory' does not find a way into their practice. And for my friends above this would have saved them the embarrassment and pain of throwing away easily winning positions.

The mistake has its origin in forgetting that chess is a game in which we should use practical measures to assist us in making our decisions – not theoretical measures such as clear advantage, slight edge or winning positions etc. I think most players remember the day they realised that there are positions which offer

a modest lead, which they do not like, and other 'level' positions which they do like. Once you appreciate that you should play the kinds of positions you like, then you have already made a great improvement of your understanding of practical chess.

It is my claim that this kind of *informator evaluation* in over the board analysis is one of the reasons why some people calculate too much. When there are forced variations you need to calculate to the end (funnily enough, most *calculating players* have a tendency to neglect this), but when you are considering positional factors there seems to be a general agreement among leading instructors (Yermolinsky and Silman are the first to spring to mind) that you perform a *blunder-check* but no actual analysis. Silman has his own ideas about how these positions should be treated. He calls this the *Silman thinking technique* and uses something he calls *fantasy positions*. This has some resemblance with what I would call the search for the *ideal square* for the pieces. The only difference is that I look at the individual piece and try to keep things as simple as possible. Silman has no problems working with three pieces for each player, but how about six or seven? Personally, I would get confused trying to juggle all these pieces in my head at the same time. Consequently I prefer looking at each individual piece. But the basic idea is good. Yermolinsky is more of a self-taught player and therefore has no greater ideas or advice concerning thinking methods. But if I could offer one simple piece of advice it must be this – ask yourself at the end of a line: Am I making progress? Is my task easier

or more difficult after my planned move?

This advice is exactly what Svidler must have been following during the following (very instructive) game.

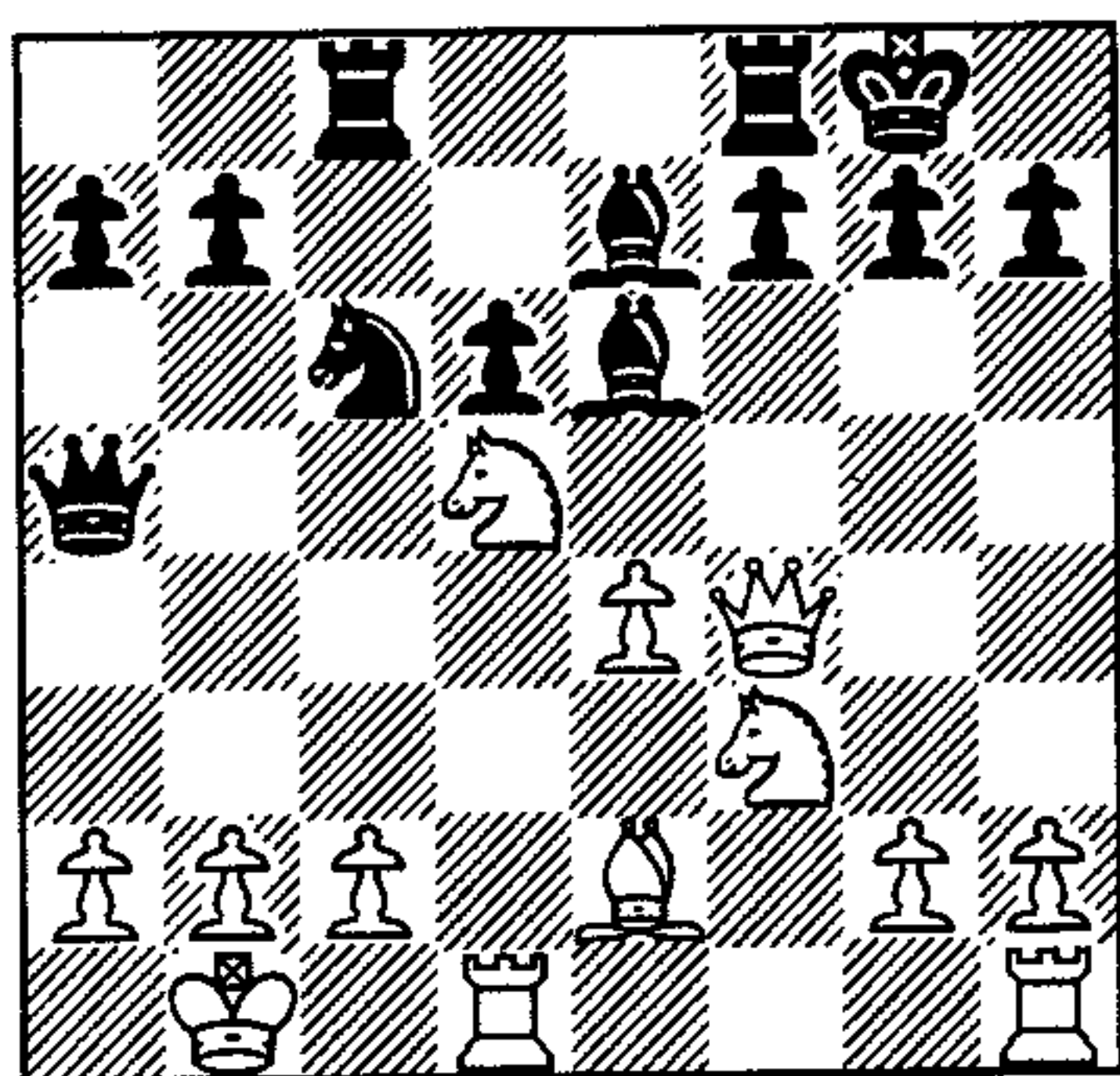
Svidler-A.Sokolov

Elista 1994

Sicilian Defence

1 e4 c5 2 d3 e6 3 dxc3 dxc6 4 d4 cxd4 5 dxd4 d6 6 f4 d6 7 e3 e5 8 d3 g4 9 d2 xe3 10 dxe3 exf4 11 dxf4 e6 12 0-0-0 e7 13 d5 0-0 14 b1 c8 15 e2 a5

Here White has a structural advantage due to the control over the d5-square but his pieces are still not ideally placed. His bishop needs to find a better square and it is not obvious yet how to activate the h1-rook.



16 e2c4!

The most obvious improvement of the position. The control over d5 is strengthened and so is the king's position. The idea is *not* to exchange on e6, but to guard the king from b3 and eliminate the pressure on the diagonal, as can be seen from the next move.

16... ffe8

After 16... ffe8 White has a tactical advantage from the exchange on d6: 17 dxe7+! dxe7 18 e6 fxe6 (note that this is highly different from 18... ffe6 after 16... ffe8 – see next note) 19 dxd6! dxc2+ 20 a1 and now both e6 and e7 are hanging, when 20... d6 21 dxe6+ e8 22 d5 h6 23 d7+ e7 24 f5+ g8 25 dxh6+ e8 (25... gxh6 26 g6+ e8 27 d7 dxe7 28 dxh6+! e8 29 g5+ e8 30 dxe7 wins) 26 d7+ e8 27 g4! wins.

17 e2b3!

From a pure positional point of view this is the most pleasant move to play. By guarding the king it prepares for the attack on the weakness on d6. 17 dxe7+?! is too greedy. After 17... ffe7 18 e6 ffe6 Black is already freed somewhat from all his troubles, which should alarm White (he has not made as much progress as Black!) that perhaps no pawn was worth this. And then after 19 dxd6? d7 20 dhd1 (20 e5 dxe5! with the idea of 21 dxe6 dxc2+ 22 a1 d3! and Black wins) 20... d4!! Black wins material.

17... c5

With the logical idea of ... a5-c4 (xb3) to fight for the control of d5.

18 d3!

The piece that needs to be activated before the direct assault is the rook and, as the weakness White is attacking is the d6-pawn, the rook belongs on the d-file. Another good feature about the text is that it prevents ... a5 (prophylaxis) while improving the pieces. This is what identifies a great move.

18... b5

18... a5 19 c3! wins for White.

19 dhd1

19 c3?! makes no sense now. It is better to play with all the pieces.

19... a5 20 dxe7+

Now, fully developed and organised, White can cash in. The rule is that you should develop fully before taking advantage of permanent weaknesses.

20... ffe7 21 dxd6! dxb3 22 d8+ e8 23 ffe8+ ffe8 24 axb3 h6 25 d4 c8 26 d2 e7 27 b4?

27 h3! is necessary.

27... c7 28 b3 a8! 29 d6! a5 30 bxa5 xa5 31 e5 a7?! 32 d4 a8 33 d3+! g6 34 d4 a3 35 d8 a5 36 e8?

36 b8.

36... b4! 37 d2 a6?

37... b5.

38 d4! a2 39 b8 h5 40 xb4 f5 41 e3 1-0

The note to move 17 is very important. The weakness is not running away; it is a static feature and White therefore uses his space advantage and freedom to manoeuvre to *improve his position* before beginning the attack on the weakness. This, of course, reflects another, very obvious, simple truth: Your attack will have greater strength if you increase the number of pieces you include.

In the Svidler game White organised first and only then attacked. Consequently Black did not gain any real compensation for the pawn as White did not lose anything important in terms of activity when he finally decided to try to win the pawn. Some might argue that there were tactics defending the pawn, and that was why White did not take it. These might include those who want to understand my ideas about conceptual thinking and the fact that I claim there

are some transcendental rules in chess, as if I resist the validity of variations as proof. This is, of course, absurd, and I will not waste more time with it, other than to say it is not true.

In the Svidler game I am unsure if he saw the 20... d4! combination at the end of 17 dxe7?!, but I am pretty confident that he felt Black was getting too much freedom too soon, and that it was thus a logical to be sceptical about 17 dxe7 altogether. Any player with common sense, regardless of whether he believes there are no truths in chess, should test his assumptions afterwards by analysing the position. As Esben Lund told me: *When I think I am being clever I am being really stupid.* The one who has no doubts about his view of the world is in danger of being more wrong than the one who believes in himself but is always open to the possibility that he might be wrong. We are never too smart to learn more...

Personally, when a truth becomes so complicated that I do not feel in complete control over all aspects of it, I get suspicious. I remember the Nobel Prize winner in Mathematics said that he felt he really understood a theory or concept only if he could grasp it in one unifying idea. This is the reasoning behind the next chapter's discussion of *Primary Concepts* as a possible way to penetrate many positions. But for now I will just wish you luck with improving your positions, your chances and your results.

Explanation of Terms

Informant - evaluation: A theoretical/scientific evaluation of a position mixed up with some practical considerations. Very useful for organising opening

theory in ECOs and for cross-lingual annotations, but not a great help for decision making at the board.

Calculating players: Players who turn on Fritz at once without first having more abstract thoughts about the position.

Blunder-check: Just checking if you missed some threats before you play the move you find natural, based on positional evaluation.

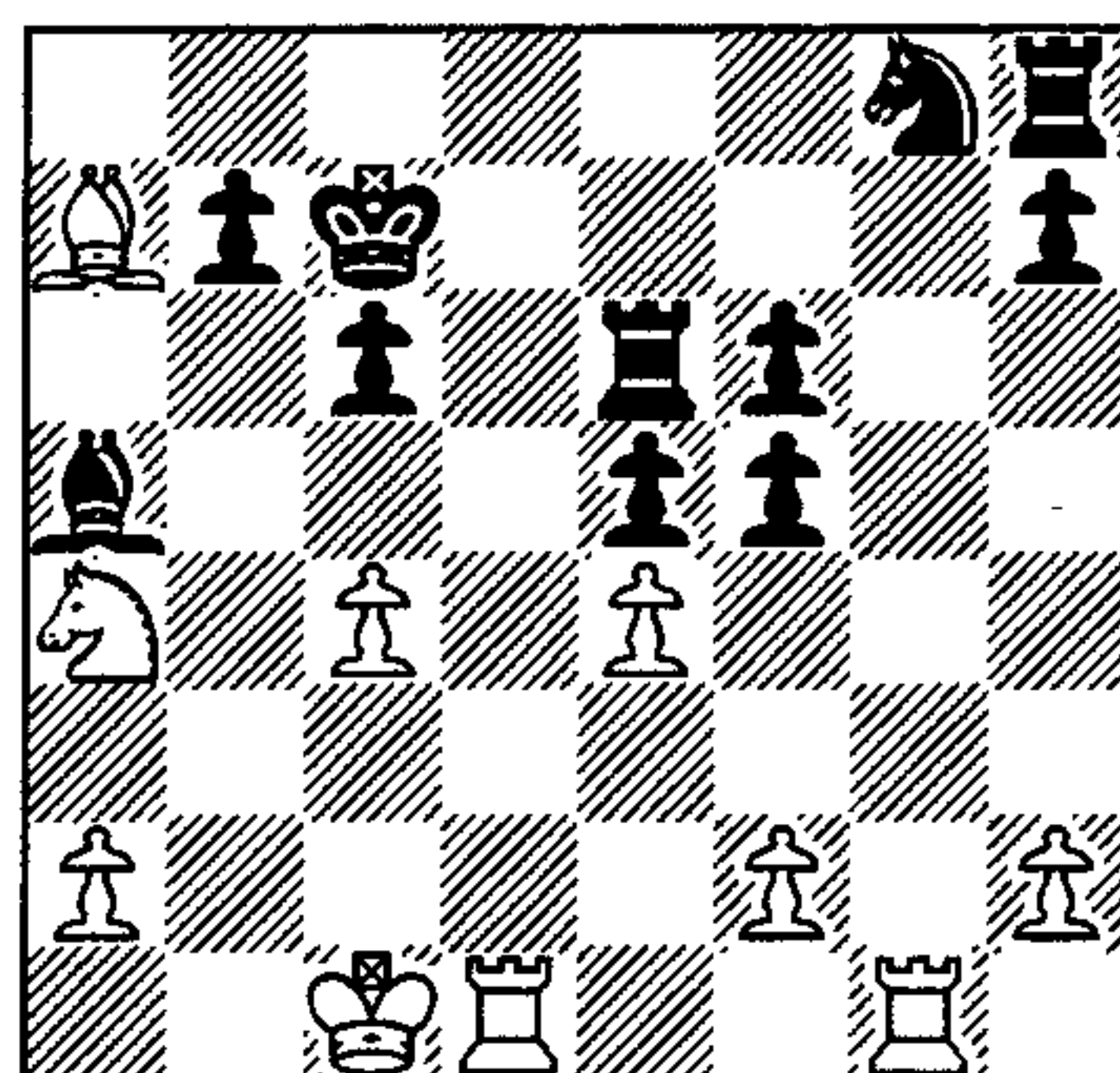
Silman Thinking Technique: A five-step method that is meant to organise your thoughts so you pay attention to what is relevant. Probably good as a training method but, most likely, also unsuitable for peak performance at the board.

Fantasy positions: When you move the pieces around in your head to set up some kind of preferable situation, with the hope you will at some point be able to create something similar.

Ideal Square: Most pieces on the board have squares where they – in the given pawn formation – would be best placed.

Primary Concept: A single unifying idea whose implementation would govern the fate of a position. Example:

Lund-Hajnal
Budapest 2002



In this position White blew it with **19 exf5?**. An abstract notion would look at the enormous lead in development White possesses and the need for an immediate attack; if not the static features such as the ruined pawn structure will begin to count. The primary concept here is the exploitation of the lead in development to get the rooks connected on the seventh rank. As this would win the game immediately it takes priority over all other considerations in the position. Therefore **19 ♖c5!!** is the right move, preventing ...♗e7. After this Black has no defence.

Further Reading

The Road to Chess Improvement
(Alexander Yermolinsky)

A wonderful book built around Yermolinsky's own games. The book presents the notion of *Trends* and illustrates very well how a 2350 player managed to climb to the top board of the U.S. team simply by analysing his own games.

Reassess your Chess
(Jeremy Silman)

I am normally unhappy with books that preach fixed methods of thinking but, despite the *Silman Thinking Technique*, this is a wonderful book which I would recommend to everyone with an Elo rating under 1800. The book succeeds in delivering the absolute basics of chess, the basics of which *all* of my pupils – and, at times, even players at international level – have too limited a knowledge. I like all books that verbalise what I assume I already know, so I can check it out...

CHAPTER TWO

Primary Concepts

Mark Dvoretsky, Jeremy Silman and I have a lot in common. We have all written books about how chess should be studied and played – although, arguably, on different levels. We also have something else in common – the belief that all positions have some kind of governing idea which is more important than all other ideas in the position. Dvoretsky writes about it in his book *Attack and Defence*, Jeremy Silman works with similar ideas in *How to Reassess your Chess* and I write about it in my book *Excelling at Chess*.

Dvoretsky does not mention anything about how you have to find this governing idea, only that it is good to use it when you do. For top players this is sufficient, but for lesser souls without a natural super-talent for chess Silman and I have different ideas to penetrate positions.

Silman works with his own system of imbalances. It is very useful as far as I can see, and I recommend anyone interested in ways of thinking other than blind calculation to read his two main

books, *Reassess your Chess* and *The Reassess your Chess Workbook*. These books are especially well designed for players under 2100, but my pupils above this level – and me, too – have all found some ideas therein useful.

But let us return to the question of how to find the most important characteristic in a position. In a tournament game the way I normally try to do this is via candidate moves and some calculation. After this I know much more about the position than I did in the beginning, and then I know what is important to achieve.

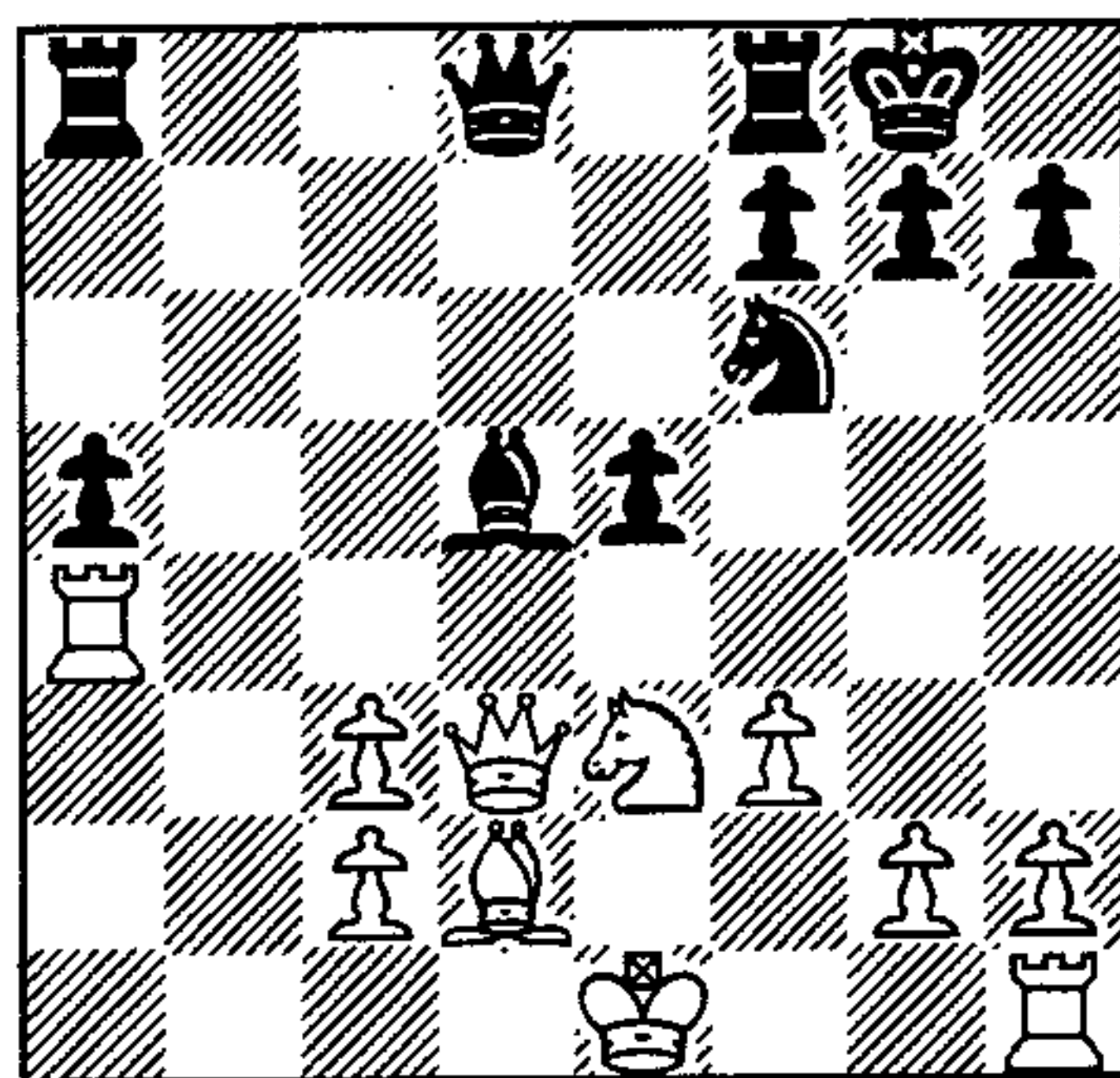
In training situations I use some very naive methods based on cognitive psychology. The key idea is that pattern recognition is easy if the pattern is present in the short-term memory. Some experiments in the US have shown that patterns with no other relations than structural are easily transferred from one area to another, strengthening the thought process and enhancing the ability to solve complex problems. What this means in terms of solving a positional

situation is that by first identifying concepts and ideal squares for the pieces in a given position we can bring this to the forefront of our mind. Then when we finally calculate we will do so with an unexpected level of accuracy and speed. Of course we will calculate slightly less, but most oversights are performed in the first one or two moves in a given line, and this is where we should improve our calculation.

Enough talk – let us look at a position.

Borgo-Acs
Charleville 2000
Sicilian Defence

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♗xd4 ♗f6 5 f3 e5 6 ♖b5+ ♗bd7 7 ♗f5 a6 8 ♗a4 d5 9 exd5 b5 10 ♗b3 ♗b6 11 ♗e3 ♗c5 12 ♖d3 0-0 13 ♗c3 ♗b7 14 ♗d2 ♗d4 15 ♗f5 a5 16 a4 ♗xc3 17 bxc3 bxa4 18 ♗xa4 ♗xd5 19 ♗e3 ♗xa4 20 ♖xa4



In this position it does not take a long time to work out that Black has the advantage. The a5-pawn is a potential danger, the doubled pawns are obvious weaknesses and Black leads in devel-

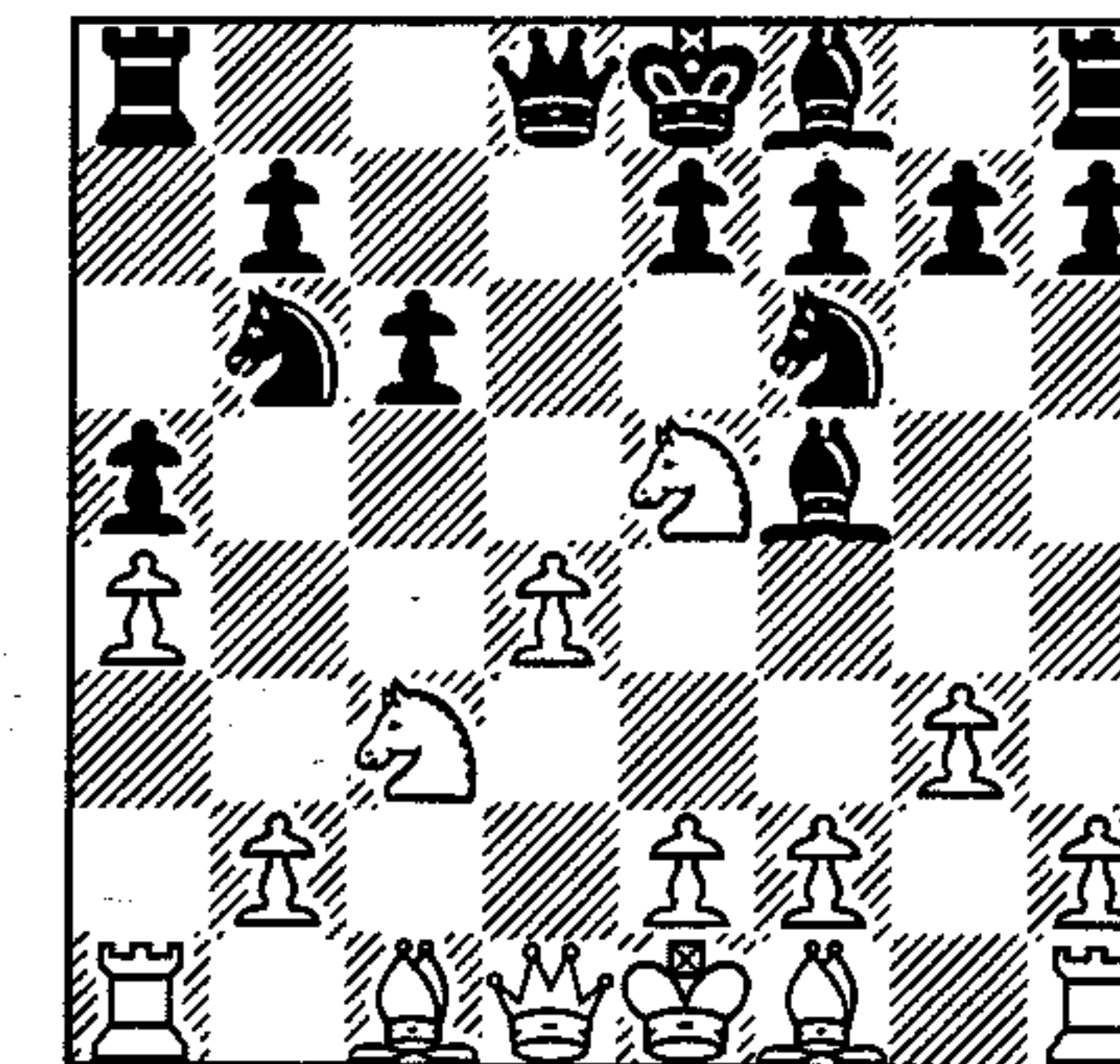
opment. Nevertheless there are two things that I would normally consider doing here – comparing pieces and finding ideal squares. In this situation, in order to save space, I will just find the ideal squares for Black: the a8-rook is good right now, the knight might go to f4 but for now it is well placed, the bishop could hardly be better but might at some point go to c6, the f8-rook should probably be on d8 and the queen on b6.

White has no good squares easily available for his pieces. The queen cannot improve and nor can the knight (on f5 it would be quite lonely), but the bishop might be better on g5, although this takes time. Meanwhile the queen's rook is simply miserable. Only the king's rook and the king are easy to improve (castling is coming).

About exchanges. White should seriously consider exchanging on d5, for with pawns on both sides of the board the bishop versus knight situation would be beneficial for him. The exchange of queens might also be in White's favour because it is more problematic for White to find a good home for the queen than is the case for Black. So as Black we now know how to place the pieces and we know what we want to prevent. If we look at it from a static point of view the correct move is 20...♖b6. The reason is simple – this is how we want to place our pieces. This also prevents ♗xd5 for at least a few moves, homing in on the g1-a7 diagonal. The only problem is the hanging piece. However, there is a rule called the 90% rule, which states that *in 90% of all situations the move which is correct for posi-*

P.Nielsen-Timman
Sigeman & Co 2002
Slav Defence

1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 ♘f3 ♗f6 4 ♗c3 dxc4 5 a4 ♗f5 6 ♗e5 ♗bd7 7 ♗xc4 ♗b6 8 ♗e5 a5 9 g3



tional reasons works out tactically. Here it makes us curious to see if the move we would like to play can be played. It turns out that it works just fine for Black.

20...♖b6! 21 0-0

After the double exchange on d5 there is a simple check on b1, winning the exchange and the game. Now Black easily exploited his advantages to win the game.

21...♖fd8 22 ♖e2 ♗c6 23 ♖h4 a4 24 c4 ♖d4 25 ♖h3 ♗d7 26 ♖g3 ♗h5 27 ♖g5 ♗f4 28 ♖f2 f6 29 ♖g3 ♖c8 30 c3 ♖d3 31 ♗h1 ♗h5 32 ♗d5 ♖xf2 33 ♖xf2 ♗xg3+ 34 hxg3 ♖xc4 0-1

Perhaps it is not possible in these limited pages to do full justice to this idea. Although it has been fully explained the transformation from an ideal to practical use is difficult. This is probably why Dvoretsky is more interested in building up his pupils' intuition than in finding algorithms that work specifically for the club player. So the torch has been handed to the rest of us. For the time being I am satisfied with being able to make fire. Perhaps in the future I will attempt to create electric light...

One of the primary concepts in a position most often seen is development, which (of course) occurs in all games. But remember that it is not meant in the sense that only development is important in a position, rather something along the lines of: if you ignore the need for development (or improving your worst piece) you will suffer as a consequence. The following game illustrates how this can happen.

In this position Black has two main concerns. 1) White is about to play ♗g2 and e2-e4, and this might be annoying. 2) Black needs to complete development. Timman, a truly creative player, does not pay sufficient attention to these points, while Heine, one of the top players of tomorrow (I hope), exploits Timman's carelessness with a combination of rapid development and simple threats.

9...♗fd7?

Perhaps Timman had seen that there was an earlier game with 10 ♗d3 here. However, the best continuation is 9...e6 10 ♗g2 ♗b4 with a balanced game in Gurevich-Gulko, Salt Lake City 1999.

10 ♗xd7!

Gaining time.

10...♖xd7 11 e4 ♗g4?

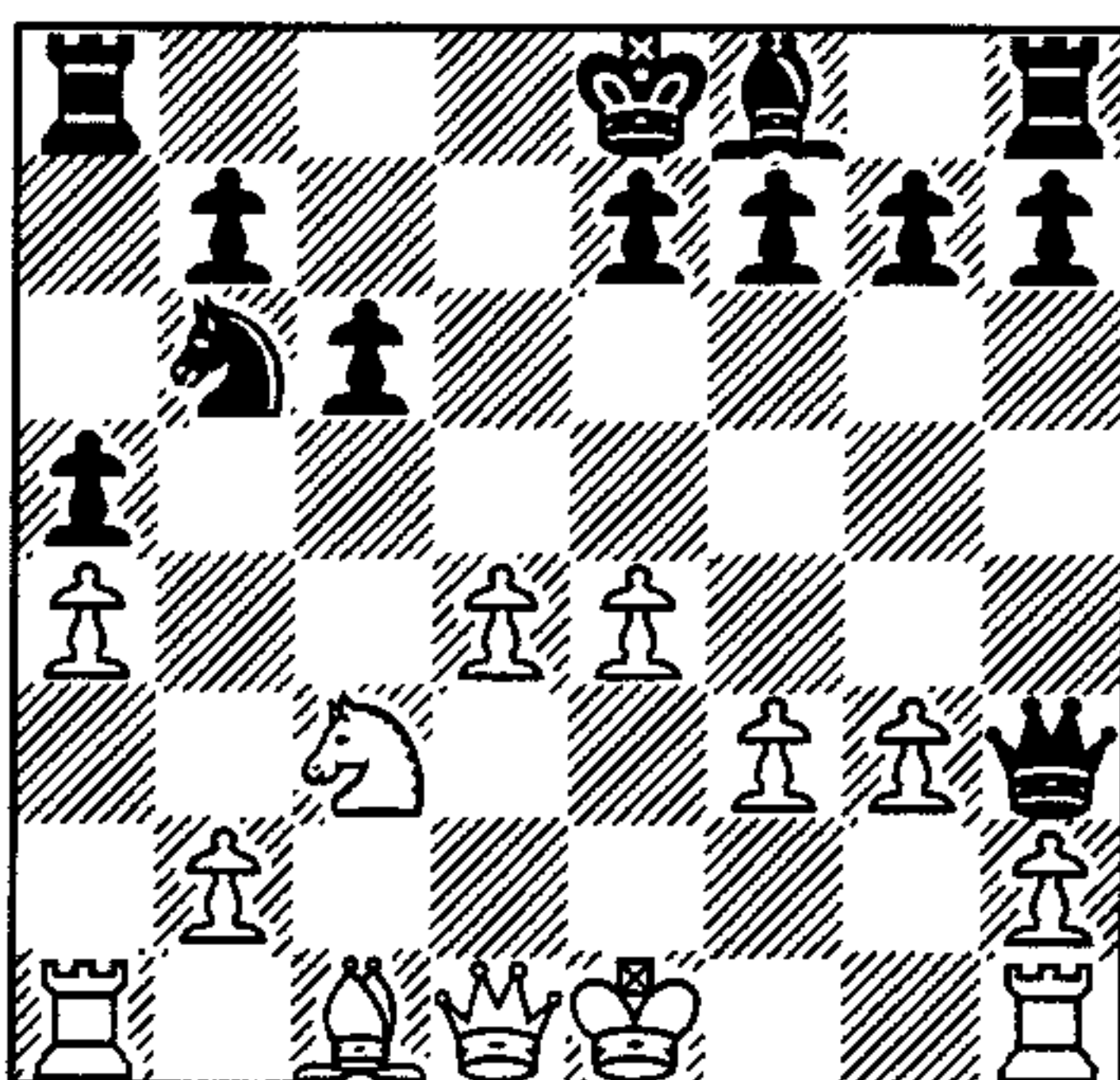
I do not like this move at all. At the moment White has no problem weakening his kingside slightly thanks to his

lead in development. 11...♘g6 12 ♘e3 is still better for White (the knight is exposed on b6).

12 f3 ♘h3?

This is just bad. Now White identifies a weakness on b7 (b6) and at the same time finishes his development. White has a clear advantage after 12...♘h5 13 ♘e3 because after 13...e6 there is 14 g4 ♘g6 15 d5!, opening up the position with tempo, exploiting his lead in development.

13 ♘xh3 ♖xh3



14 ♖b3!

Developing the queenside with gain of time.

14...♗a6 15 ♘e3 ♖g2?

Black continues to ignore both his weaknesses and his poor development. 15...♖c8 16 d5 ♘d7 17 ♗c1 is clearly better for White but there is still a game to be played. Now White wins.

16 0-0-0 ♖xf3 17 ♗he1 g6

It was too late to save the game as the following line indicates: 17...e6 18 d5! ♘b4 19 dxe6 0-0 20 e7 ♗e8 21 ♘xb6 ♗xb6 22 ♗d8 and Black loses.

18 d5

Black is finished.

18...♘g7 19 ♘xb6 0-0 20 ♘d4

♘xd4 21 ♗xd4 ♖f2 22 ♗ed1 ♖xh2 23 ♖xb7 1-0

It is remarkable that a world class player like Timman can end up in such trouble by neglecting development and failing to identify a chief weakness. This is the danger of intuition and calculation alone.

In the Chapter *How intuition develops* in his book *Attack and Defence* Dvoretsky describes a training method he calls intuition training (starting on p. 67). The idea is simple – you have about five simple positions, slightly different in nature, and you have to ‘solve’ them in fifteen minutes. This, of course, helps develop a number of different abilities but, most importantly, it provokes intuition in a way that can be compared to muscle development in weight training. I am a keen supporter of this combination of solving exercises and having a good discussion about the solutions – hence this book.

When I started chess coaching as more than just a hobby I immediately understood that I needed some tools to help explain decisions based purely on positional considerations to players who are not blessed with natural, strong intuition. But wherever I looked for such tools I found only outdated ideas. Of course a good place to start is a Nimzowitsch classic, but the nature of positional chess seems to me to be far more complicated than the great father of the Danish chess tradition had envisioned. Nonetheless his main work, *My System*, is obligatory reading for anyone hoping to nail down those key chess concepts. The book was published in

1925, and since then there have been other major works. In the 1950s a Russian named Lipnitsky published a book which can be translated as *Problems of Modern Chess Theory*, where various aspects of chess ‘rules’ are dealt with. This book has, unfortunately, never been translated, but a Russian friend of mine explained the content to me and it seems that the book can be seen as a deeper version of my own book *Excelling at Chess*. In the 1990s we had the Mark Dvoretsky books. So far there are about 10 of them, but I must honestly say that I have lost count. Most important of these are *Positional Play*, *Training for the Tournament Player* and a recent book entitled *School of Chess Excellence 3, Strategic Play*. The others are, of course, also great, but these three deal more with positional play. There are also some works by Euwe and Kotov that are worth studying.

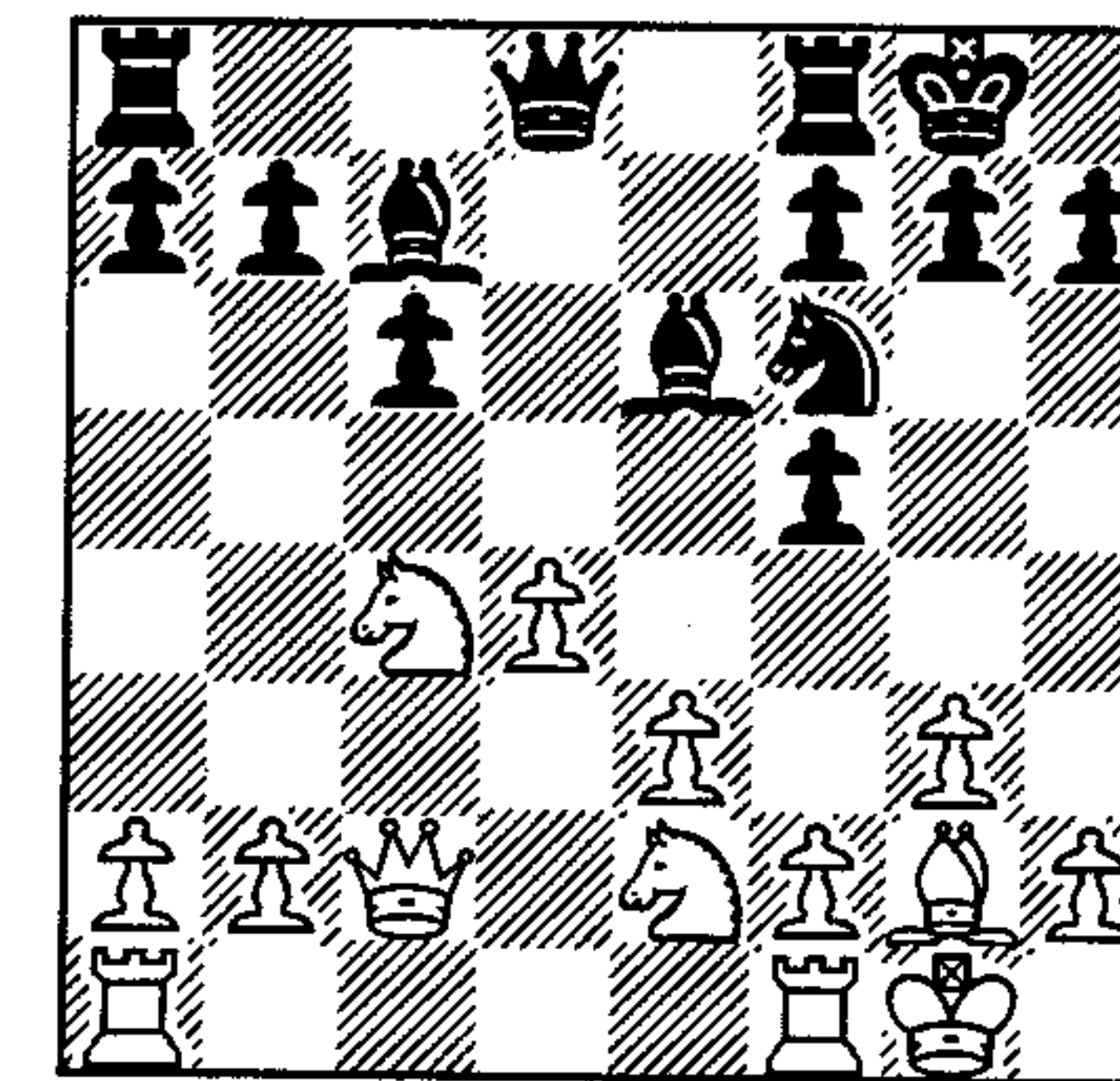
But neither Dvoretsky’s books nor any of the others mentioned here gave me the tools I needed to explain how *very* simple solutions were found, with the exception of the principle of the worst placed piece (see page 31), which is obviously a useful tool in positional considerations. Eventually I came up with some ideas that could be used to explain manoeuvring as something based on more than individual solutions to individual examples.

The main notions are those of primary concepts (see chapter 1), comparing pieces and ideal squares.

Comparing Pieces

This is a simple exercise which can at times help to get a better understanding

of a position. I have taken an example from a recent book that I rather like, *Can you be a Positional Chess Genius?* by Angus Dunnington.



White to move

Let us try to compare the pieces and from this make some deductions. We should compare pieces that are likely to be exchanged, so here the e2-knight and c7-bishop are comparable, as are White’s bishop and its opposite number on e6 (as Black has no intentions of taking on c4), leaving (by means of elimination) the knights on c4 and f6. This might not be what happens in the game, but that is of less importance because the main idea behind comparing pieces is to get a good sense of both the position and of what exchanges are likely to favour who. I always do this from the top but often you will find it useful to reduce the process to some important pieces and pay less attention to others. In this case, though, we consider the whole army.

Kings first – principally Black has a safer king position as he has committed no pawns and thus not created weaknesses. The difference is minimal but is present nevertheless and should there-

fore be included in the comparison.

The queen is well placed on c2, attacking a potential weakness on f5, and there is no risk of being disturbed. The other queen still has to find the right square, so I prefer White somewhat.

White's queen's rook seems to have easier access to a good open file, while the potential queenside minority attack adding to its influence. This makes the rook superior to the one on a8.

White's other rook also has more possibilities than its opposite number.

I prefer White's light-squared bishop, especially in view of the respective pawn formations. For me it is obvious that Black favours an exchange of these two bishops due to the resulting weakened light squares around the white king (the exchange also trades a 'bad' bishop for White's wonderful bishop).

I believe White's knight is a little better than the dark-squared bishop as the latter has no active possibilities of its own but can only hope for the exchange – White, on the other hand, can choose when (and if). However, there is potential for the bishop to become strong, so it is not a clear choice.

Finally, neither the c4-knight nor Black's knight are too well placed, so I prefer neither.

Now, what did we learn from that? First we learned a little about who has the most room for improvement in the position, and we also learned something about what kind of improvement that might be. The most obvious exchange to seek for Black is that of his bad bishop for White's good bishop, especially as this would create weaknesses around the white king. Actually in the diagram posi-

tion Black is already threatening ...♙d5!, which would be the choice after a move like 13 ♖f4, e.g. 13...♙xf4 14 gxf4 ♙d5!, when Black has fully equalised. So a natural conclusion will be to try to prevent ...♙e6-d5.

We also learned that White has easier play and that he should probably try to play for an advantage in one way or another. This is apparent from the number of preferable pieces. Normally this is something you get a better feeling for after having performed this little exercise. *Even though you can carry out an overview of all the pieces at a glance, you will be able to increase the amount of possibilities and concepts you can see if you look at parts of the board individually.* This example is typical. So is the next, where we come to finding ideal squares.

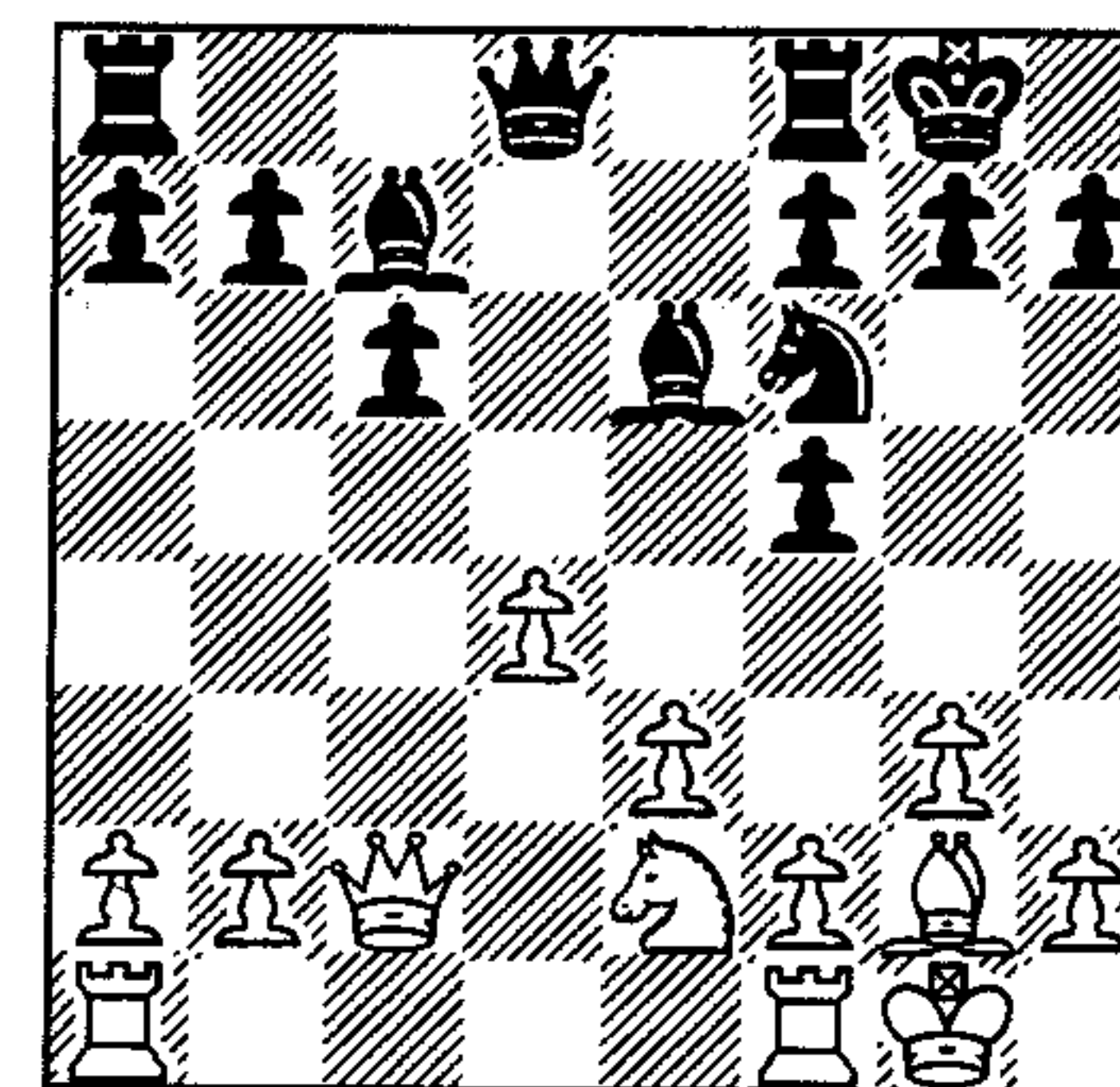
Ideal Squares

The subject of ideal squares is (again) not an exact science, rather it concerns how we get a better feel for the position. From the point of view of a coach discussing a position with a pupil, this is an excellent indicator of positional understanding – or the absence of it.

I mentioned it briefly in *Excelling at Chess*, where I called it the Christmas exercise. The key idea is that you ask your piece: 'Where do you want to go my little friend? What would you like for Christmas?' Remember that this does not refer to what you would like to do overall in the position – that would be a different exercise, which can also be useful. But I like to cut everything down to small pieces before I perform a full analysis.

White's king is fine and the queen is

ideal, safe behind its own pawn chain and hitting the f5-pawn. White's rook would be better on c1 but, in the case of a minority attack, might be perfect on b1, or even a1. The king's rook looks best placed on d1 but it is not so easy to decide just yet. The bishop is perfect on g2 and the king's knight belongs on f4. And it is as simple as that. But what about the knight on c4? Imagine removing this piece and being able to put it somewhere else on the board:



Where would you place a White knight?

Personally, I would prefer to place it on c5. From there it disturbs the bishop on e6 and attacks the weakest spot in Black's camp, the b7-pawn. For Black it goes like this: The queen would be perfect on d5 after the exchange of bishops. The a8-rook belongs on d8, the other rook on e8, the e6-bishop on d5 and the other bishop and the knight have no obvious good squares – an important observation. However, one should remember that these last two are not particularly poorly placed where they are, and they still have some decent squares at their disposal. The bishop has d6 and

the knight can hop into e4, but to call these squares ideal would be misleading. Nevertheless, things change, and these pieces are not that badly placed.

So what can we do with this? Well, we can easily identify White's worst placed piece as that which is furthest from its ideal square. Therefore a possible plan could be to redirect the knight to c5 in some way. Here it makes little sense to go via c1 and b3 as White would then be susceptible to any kind of opening up of the position. So ♖e5-d3-c5 seems to be the right direction, and this also eliminates Black's main idea of ...♙d5 in more than one way. Incidentally, it was what White ended up playing in the game:

McDonald-Lukacs
Budapest 1995
Trompovsky Attack

1 d4 ♖f6 2 ♙g5 d5 3 ♙xf6 exf6 4 e3 c6 5 ♖d2 ♙d6 6 g3 0-0 7 ♙g2 f5 8 ♖e2 ♖d7 9 0-0 ♖f6 10 c4 dxc4 11 ♖xc4 ♙c7 12 ♚c2 ♙e6

This is the initial diagram position.

13 ♖e5!

The knight is on its way to c5, from where it can exert pressure on b7. At the same time the text gives the other knight the option of going to f4 without being removed by the enemy bishop. Other moves prove to be insufficient, e.g. 13 b3 g6! and White will have to live with ...♙d5, or 13 ♖f4? ♙xf4 14 gxf4 ♙d5! and Black is no worse.

13...♖d5?

This move makes little sense as the knight has no business on d5 and the square is now unavailable to the bishop.

Angus Dunnington gives some analysis and some comments in his book but, unfortunately, he does not reach the depths of this position. I have taken the liberty of analysing some alternatives.

Not very pleasant is 13...♙xe5 14 dxe5 ♘d5 (or 14...♘d7 15 ♖c3! ♖c7 16 f4 when White has a clear positional edge – Black can quickly find himself in trouble, e.g. 16...f6?? 17 ♘d4 ♖ae8 18 ♘xe6 ♖xe6 19 ♙d5! and White wins) 15 ♘d4 g6 16 e4 fxe4 17 ♘xe6 fxe6 18 ♖xe4, and although Black's position is solid there seems little by way of future counterplay. If the queenside pawns start to move they will only become weak, and the knight is sitting pretty with nowhere attractive to go.

Simply bad is 13...♘d7? when White has the brilliant computer-like 14 ♘xc6!! bxc6 15 ♙xc6 ♘b6 (after 15...♖b8 16 d5 White regains his piece with interest) 16 ♙xa8 ♘xa8 17 ♖fd1 and Black is quite uncoordinated.

But more prudent than all this is a simple move like 13...♖e7!?, bringing the pieces into play. After 14 ♘d3 (White cannot play 14 ♘f4 due to 14...♙xe5 15 dxe5 ♘g4 16 ♖c3 ♙c8! and Black will win a pawn for which White's compensation is nothing special) 14...g6 15 ♘c5 ♙d6 and Black is only slightly worse and can hope for a successful defence.

14 ♘d3! g6 15 ♘c5 ♙c8?

The bishop should not be down here. If White wants to exchange it Black should not be disappointed. Try to compare the pieces; try to look at ideal squares. Better was 15...♖b8.

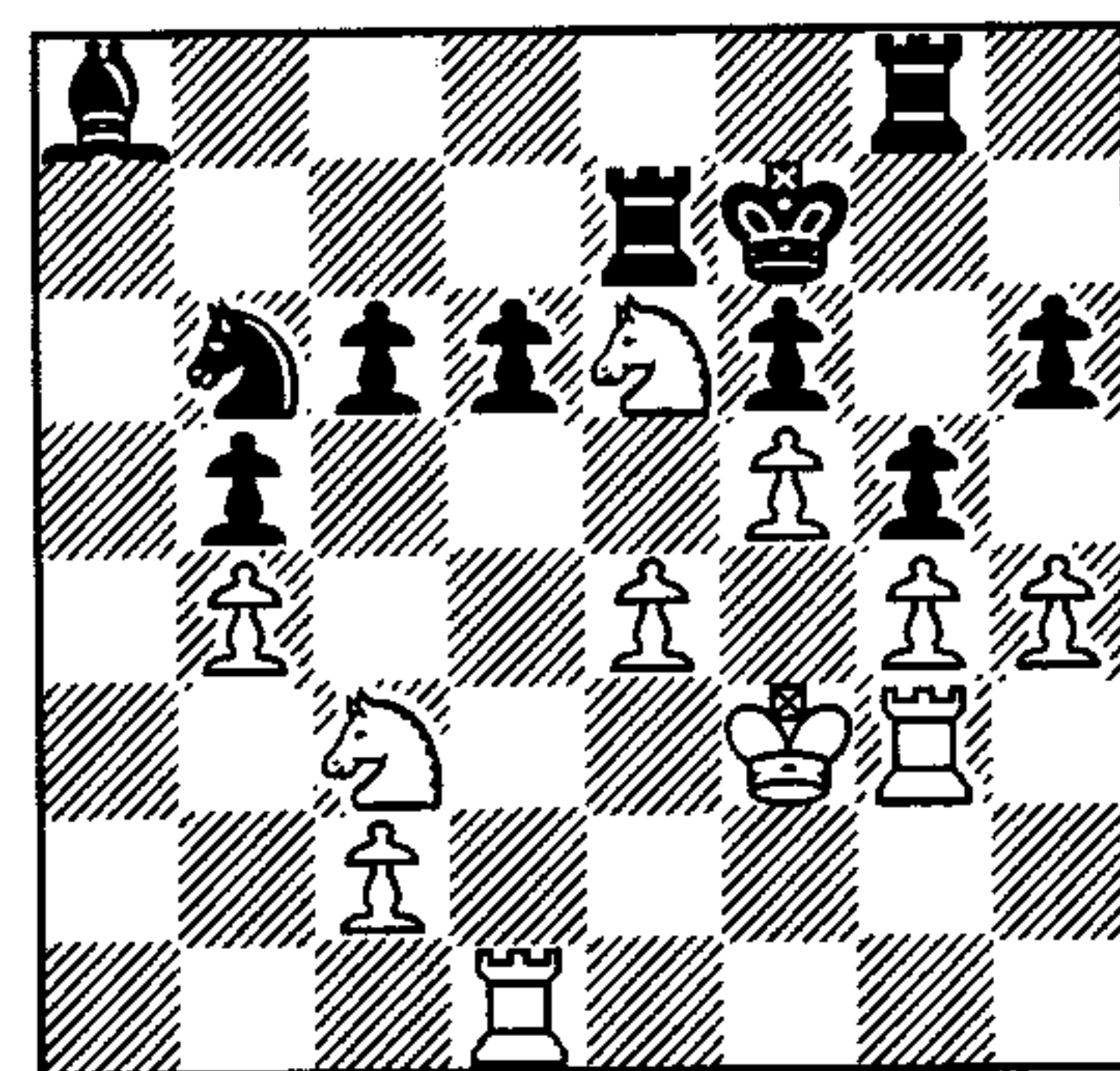
16 ♘c3 ♘f6

How obvious it seems now that Black did not play accurately. The game ended:

17 b4 a6 18 a4 ♙d6 19 b5 axb5 20 axb5 ♖xa1 21 ♖xa1 ♖c7 22 bxc6 bxc6 23 ♖a4 ♘d7 24 ♘a6 ♙xa6 25 ♖xa6 ♘b8 26 ♖c4 h5 27 ♘a4 h4 28 ♘c5 hxg3 29 hxg3 ♖c8 30 ♖b1 ♖e7 31 ♖b7 ♖e8 32 e4 ♙xc5 33 dxc5 fxe4 34 ♙xe4 ♘d7 35 ♖a7 ♘e5 36 ♖c3 ♖d8 37 ♖c7 ♖e6 38 ♙g2 ♖d7 39 ♖c8+ ♙h7 40 ♖a1 ♖d1 41 ♖xd1 ♖xc8 42 ♖h5+ 1-0

One Move from the Ideal Square

I have often noticed that a piece is best improved to the point where it is just one move away from its ideal square. Only when our pieces occupy this position are they ready to be transformed into their perfect state. If you look at the diagram at the beginning of this chapter you will see that the e2-knight and both rooks are all waiting, one move away from their ideal squares. Here is another example:



White to move

In this famous position, from the game Lasker-Capablanca, St. Petersburg 1914, White's knight on e6 is already ideal, but let us take a look at the rest of the pieces. The ♖d1 wants to reach a7,

The other h7 and the king is better moving away from the same diagonal as the bishop – in the game Lasker chose the g3-square for the king, and that seems to be a wise choice. The other knight needs to find itself a good square, and in the game this leads to e4-e5 followed by ♘c3-e4, from where it rules the world. But let us take a look at how the game went.

31 hxg5 hxg5 32 ♖h3!

The rook is on its way to its ideal square, h7, simultaneously vacating g3 for the king. But now after

32...♖d7 33 ♙g3 ♙e8

White continues to improve his pieces slowly with

34 ♖dh1 ♙b7?!

Then comes the final breakthrough.

35 e5!!

The pawn is of little importance. Control over the dark squares means everything.

35...dxe5 36 ♘e4 ♘d5 37 ♘6c5!

Now Black is lost. Notice how the rooks have not rushed off to their ideal squares since they could do little on their own. After 34...♙b7 Black was lost in a sea of forks but it is still worth noting that White had prepared his pieces, one by one, to almost their optimum before finally slotting them into ideal squares all at once, so to speak. White now won easily.

37...♙c8 38 ♘xd7 ♙xd7 39 ♖h7 ♖f8 40 ♖a1 ♙d8 41 ♖a8+ ♙c8 42 ♘c5 1-0

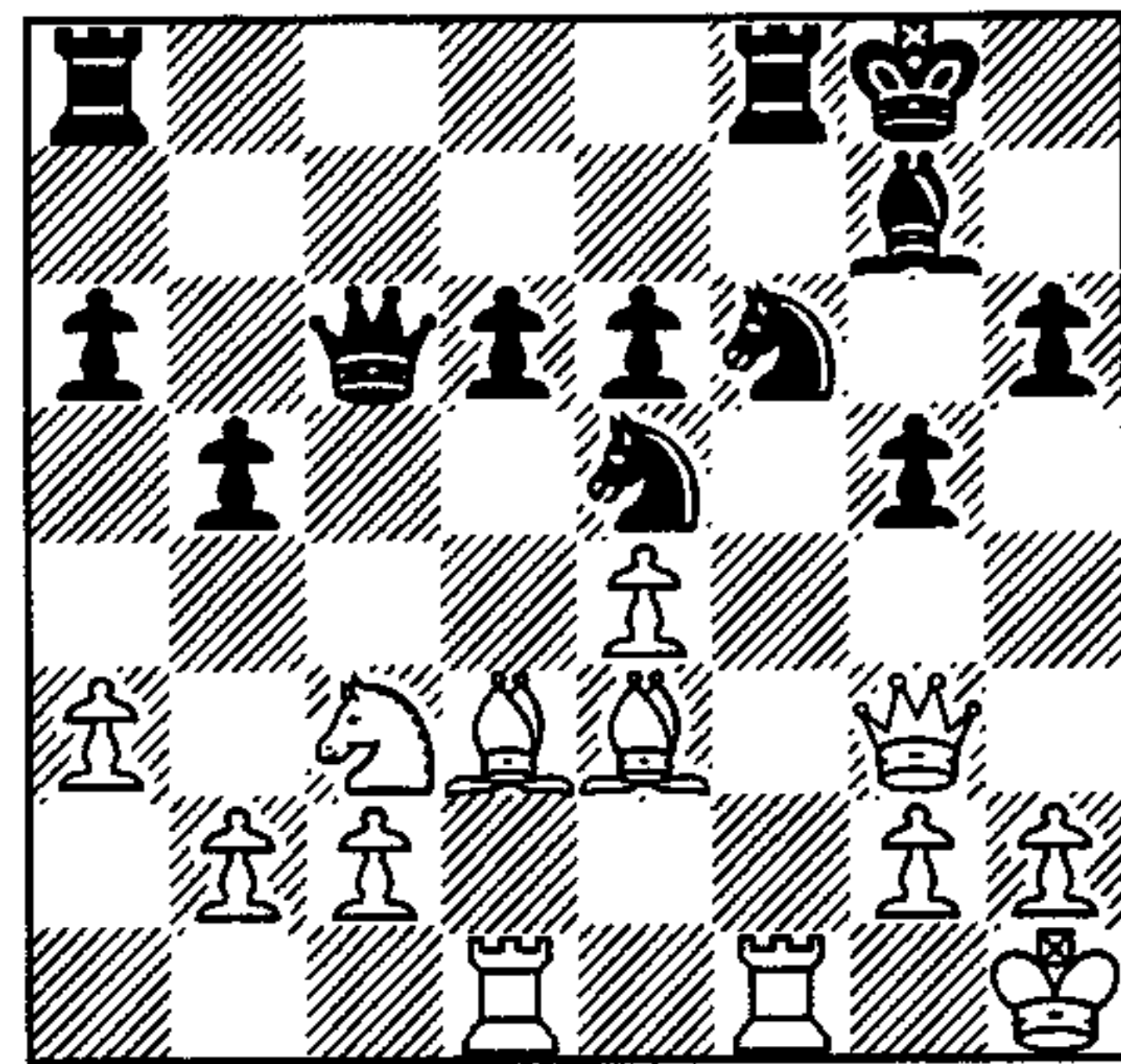
It is my firm belief that intuition does not develop as random pattern recognition, but rather the recognition of patterns previously investigated and under-

stood. That is why looking through unannotated games from a database or playing through the complete works of Averbakh will not seriously improve your chess. Instead we should work with annotated games and – even better – discuss positions with stronger players who know something about teaching. Analysing your own games in depth and trying to understand the reasons for the mistakes you commit is, obviously, also a part of this. It is my hope these simple tools will prove helpful for you in this task.

Improving your Worst Placed Piece

A student of mine informed me that in the recent book by Grandmasters Alexander Beliavsky and Adrian Mikhalchishin, *Secrets of Chess Intuition*, there is a chapter entitled *Improving your Worst Placed Piece*. I immediately rushed off to buy the book since this is something I have been preaching to all my students for as long as I can remember. However, the book was a major disappointment, although the idea is not. They ascribe the concept to GM Makogonov, but I have a feeling that players have been aware of it all the way back to the beginning of the last century. In fact I cannot recall where I got the idea from but I think I actually pieced it together by myself, too. So I am sure thousands of other people who think at the chessboard have also done so.

But enough talk. Let us jump to the first example. It is not squeaky clean but does demonstrate the practical use of the idea in a tense situation. The position is taken from my first ever victory over a 2600-player.



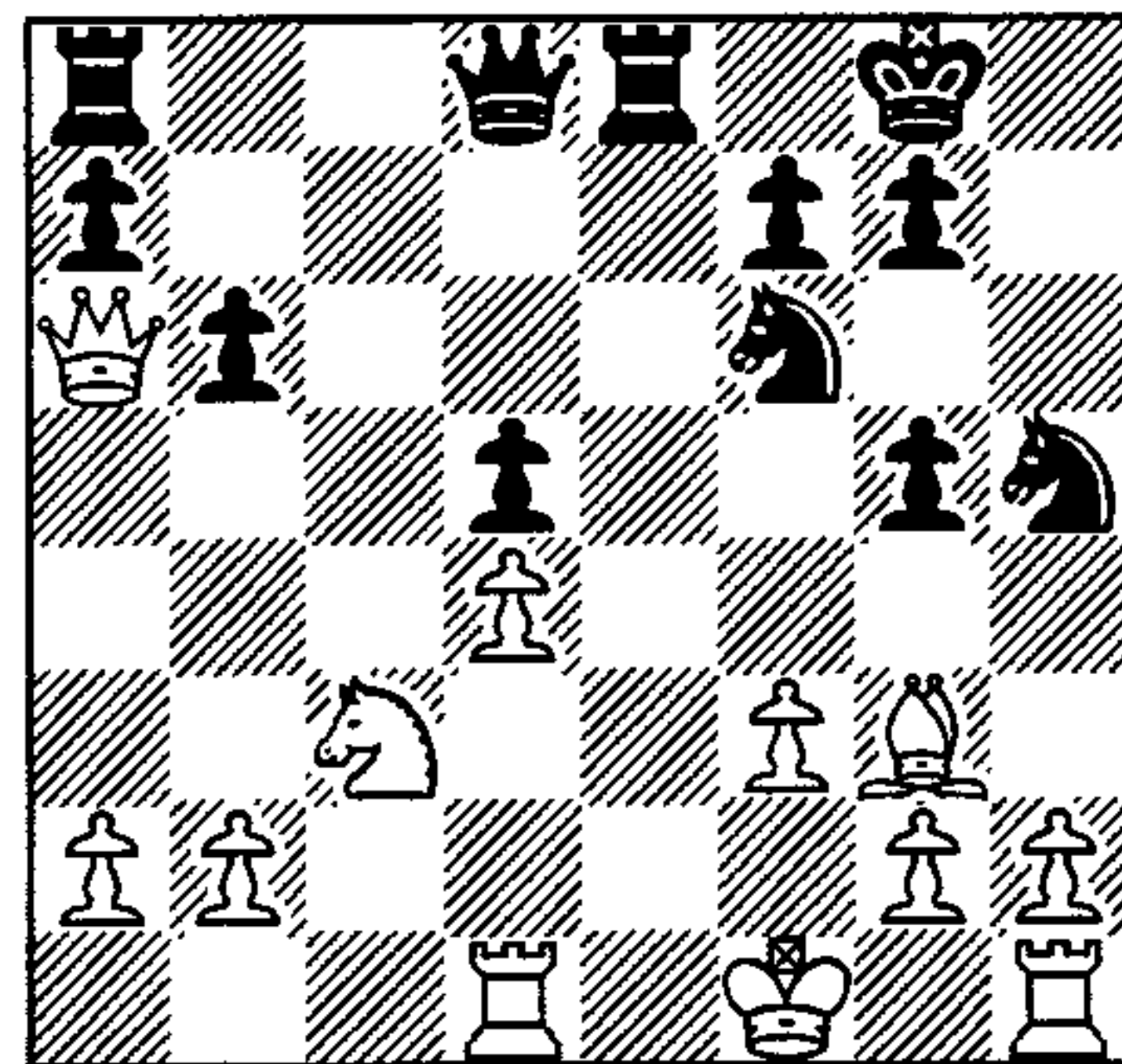
Black to move

In this position Black has no immediate way to improve. Action on both wings seems currently to be unjustified, although Black is well organised. I must admit that I was completely lost in terms of finding a plan here. All I could see was that Jonny might attack my e6-pawn in some lines and that the rook on a8 was not really contributing to my game. So for that reason I played the innocent-looking **24...♖ae8!**? How the game continued is not really relevant for this chapter, but I can say that I did not at one moment regret the move, which is the kind of move one could imagine Petrosian and Karpov making. Instead of having to worry about tricks later I protect my only unprotected piece in the position while slightly improving my worst placed piece. It is not great logic, but good and healthy practical chess.

Let me try to be semi-philosophical about the subject. We could look at the pieces in terms of points – as all of us did in our younger days – but count only those that are taking part in the action. We regard those with only potential as worth nothing in the short-

term or as less valuable. This is what a computer does. Here is an example:

Gelfand-Short
Brussels 1991



Black to move

This position is actually rather simple, yet at the same time highly complex. Black has some advantage but it is mainly based on time. If White had two moves (♔f2 and ♜he1) he would have no problems whatsoever. Therefore for Black it is a matter of whether he wants to play for an advantage with an attack. The answer is, not surprisingly: Yes. So what is to be done? The key rule in attacking chess is that all pieces should join in the offensive. And here the least likely piece to play a part in the attack at the moment is the a8-rook. Thus the correct plan is to get this rook into action in some way.

18...b5!

18...♟xg3+!? 19 hxc3 b5! is another way to play the same idea. It might give White more breathing space but still it seems dangerous.

19 ♖xb5

Here comes the hard evidence for the

supremacy of the ...b6-b5 thrust. 19 ♔f2 is the standard untangling move, but here Black wins time: 19...♞e6 20 ♜a3 ♟g4+!! 21 fxc4 ♜f6+ 22 ♔g1 ♟xg3 23 hxc3 ♞ae8 and the final piece enters the attack with deadly effect.

After 19 ♟xb5 ♞e6 20 ♜a3 ♟xg3+ 21 hxc3 ♞b8 22 ♟c3 (22 ♜d3 ♜a5) 22...♟g4! Black has a very strong attack.

19 ♟e5!? is the reason why ...♟xg3 can be considered instead of 18...b5. Then 19...b4 20 ♟b5 ♞e6 21 ♜a4 g4 gives Black good attacking chances.

19...♟xg3+ 20 hxc3 ♞b8 21 ♜d3 ♞xb2

Black has a clear advantage and went on to win as follows:

22 ♞d2 ♜b6 23 g4 ♜b8! 24 ♟d1 ♜g3 25 ♟f2 ♞b6 26 ♞h3 ♞be6 27 ♞d1 ♜c7 28 ♜d2 ♞e3 29 ♞c1?! ♜f4 30 ♞d1 g6 31 ♔g1 ♔g7 32 ♜c1 ♞e2?? (32...♟d7!, heading for c4, is the quicker route to victory) **33 ♜xf4 gxf4 34 ♟d3 g5 35 a4 ♞a2 36 g3 fxc3 37 ♟c5? g2 38 ♞g3 ♞ee2 39 ♟b3 ♞eb2 40 ♟c1 ♞xa4 41 ♟d3 ♞ba2 42 ♞xg2 ♞xg2+ 43 ♔xg2 ♞xd4 44 ♔f2 ♟d7 45 ♔e3 ♞a4 46 ♞c1 ♟b6 47 ♞c7 ♟c4+ 48 ♔e2 ♞a2+ 49 ♔e1 ♞a3 50 ♔e2 ♞a2+ 51 ♔e1 a5 52 f4 gxf4 53 ♟xf4 ♟e3 54 ♞a7 a4 55 g5 a3 56 g6 ♟g2+ 57 ♟xg2 ♞xg2 58 ♞xa3 fxc6 59 ♞a6 ♔h6 60 ♞d6 ♞g5 61 ♔f2 ♔h5 62 ♔f3 ♔h4 63 ♞a6 ♔h3 64 ♔f2 ♞g4 65 ♞a3+ ♔h2 0-1**

In this example the rooks on a8 and h1 had something in common in that they both lacked scope and therefore had little value. Black proved an advantage by improving his worst placed piece and, in doing so, found the ideal

placement (on the second rank) and how to implement the subsequent plan. This kind of treatment is presented by Mark Dvoretsky in *Attack and Defence*, Jeremy Silman in *How to Reassess your Chess* and myself in *Excelling at Chess*. We all explain it in a different way and have different methods of reaching this conclusion but, in essence, we agree.

But back to the worst placed piece. What I disliked about the Beliavsky/Mikhalchishin book is that it is mainly just a collection of simple examples. There are few ideas in the book and it feels like even fewer thoughtful annotations. In Chapter 12 (p. 103-107) they formulate the theory concerning this idea as follows:

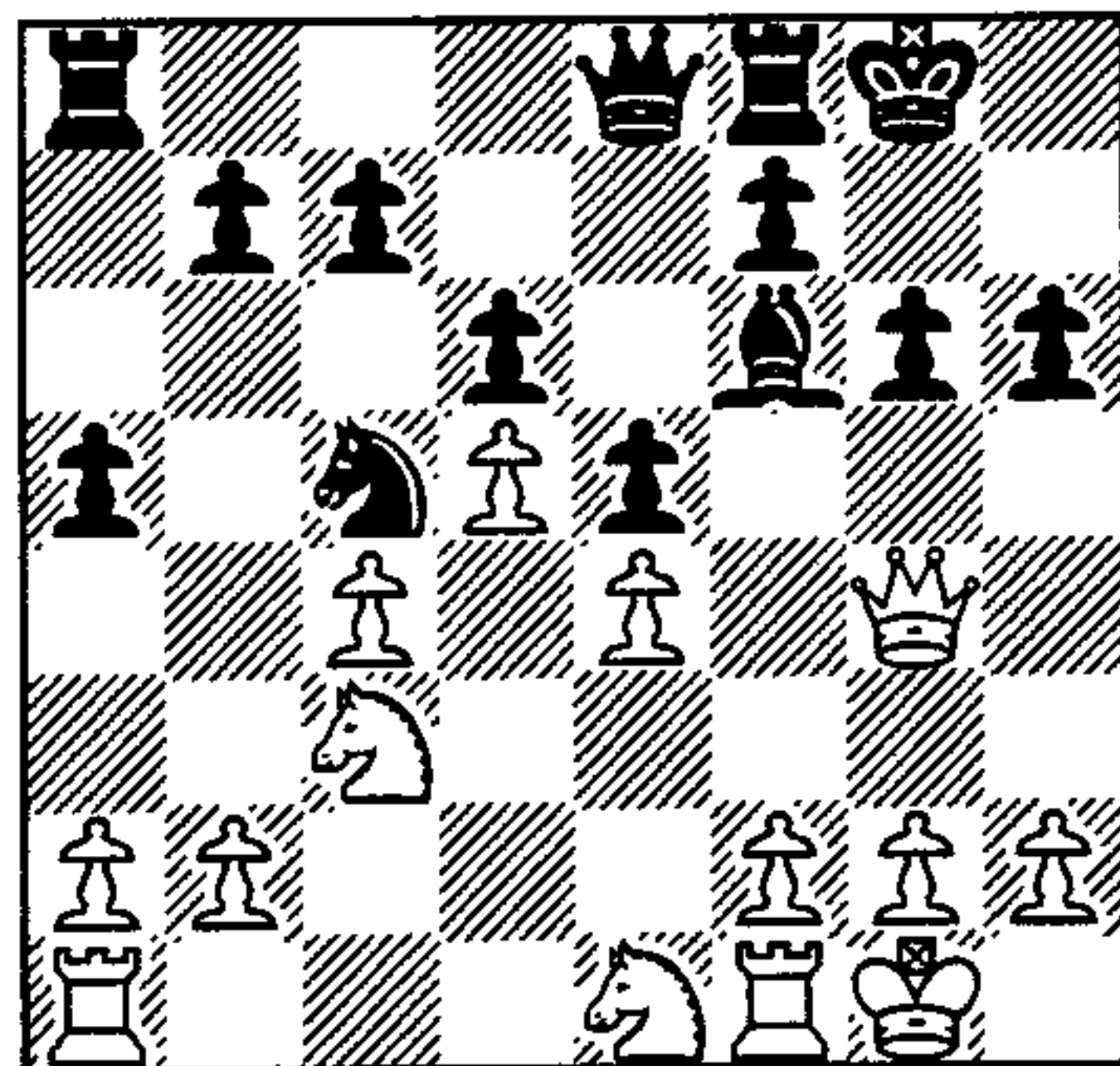
The late Makagonov (one of Kasparov's first trainers) was a strong positional player and formulated some useful general principles. The most famous of these is that, in balanced positions, when neither side has any direct threats or concrete plan, it is necessary either to relocate your worst placed piece to its best square, or to exchange it off. (p. 103).

This description would perhaps fit well with my game, but the Short game does not really fall into the description of a balanced position with no threats, unless you choose to see this as a very superficial evaluation, of course. The main point in the Short game is that the absence of the h1-rook from the proceedings allows for Black to establish a kind of power play for some time, affording him the possibility of obtaining a decisive advantage. Actually a development advantage is best understood with the help of a situation taken from ice hockey where, for a limited time, a team can have more players on the ice

than the opposition, a situation that must be exploited to the maximum.

The final, most clear-cut, example of improving your worst piece is taken from the Beliavsky/Mikhalchishin book.

Ivanov-Benjamin
Jacksonville 1990



Black to move

Here you could argue that the worst placed piece is the f8-rook as it has no scope and even no moves. This would, of course, be partly true, but as the primary way for the rook to gain scope is by ...f7-f5, it is not too bad. Moreover, how do we decide which piece is the worst placed? I have found that a good way to do this is simply by trying to find the ideal squares for all the pieces. In this case the only piece with which we would have problems is the bishop, which has no scope (as we cannot hope that White is kind enough to open up with f2-f4). Therefore we have to find a way for this piece to contribute to the action. Bishops tend to be better off being some way from the centre in order not to be disturbed (of course an untroubled bishop in the centre is

great). It takes some thinking and a free mind to find the ideal square – or best square, as B & A call it. But I prefer to use the Christmas exercise – where would this bishop be placed if the wish were granted? The answer: b6!

14...♗d8! 15 ♖e2 c6 16 ♜d1 ♗c7 17 h4 ♖e7 18 g3 ♔g7 19 ♘f3 a4 20 h5 ♗a5 21 ♜c1 ♖d7 22 ♜fd1 ♜ae8 23 ♔g2 f5 24 exf5 ♜xf5 25 ♘e4 ♘xe4 26 ♖xe4 ♜ef8 27 ♜d3 ♜xh5 28 ♘h4 ♜xh4 29 gxh4 ♜f4 30 ♖e2 ♖f5 31 c5 cxd5 32 cxd6 ♗b6 33 ♜f1 e4 34 ♜g3 d4 35 ♖d2 e3 36 ♖e1 ♖d5+ 37 ♔h3 ♖e6+ 38 ♔g2 ♖d5+ 39 f3 ♖xd6 0-1

After completing this chapter I was made aware of the following quote from Dvoretsky's book, *Positional Play*:

In positions of strategic manoeuvring (where time is not significant) seek the worst placed piece. Activating that piece is often the most reliable way of improving your position.

Explanation of Terms

Ideal Square (the *Best square* or the *Christmas square*): The square from where a defined piece can have the greatest possible influence. Not defined by the possibility of getting there, but more formulated as an ambition.

Undefended pieces: The cause of so much misery in the chess world today!

Power play: A term from ice hockey, where a player is sent off the ice for two minutes (due to a penalty). The remaining six players against five is then the *power play* situation. In chess this can be applied to a position where a player has one or more pieces on the board not taking part in the actual struggle.

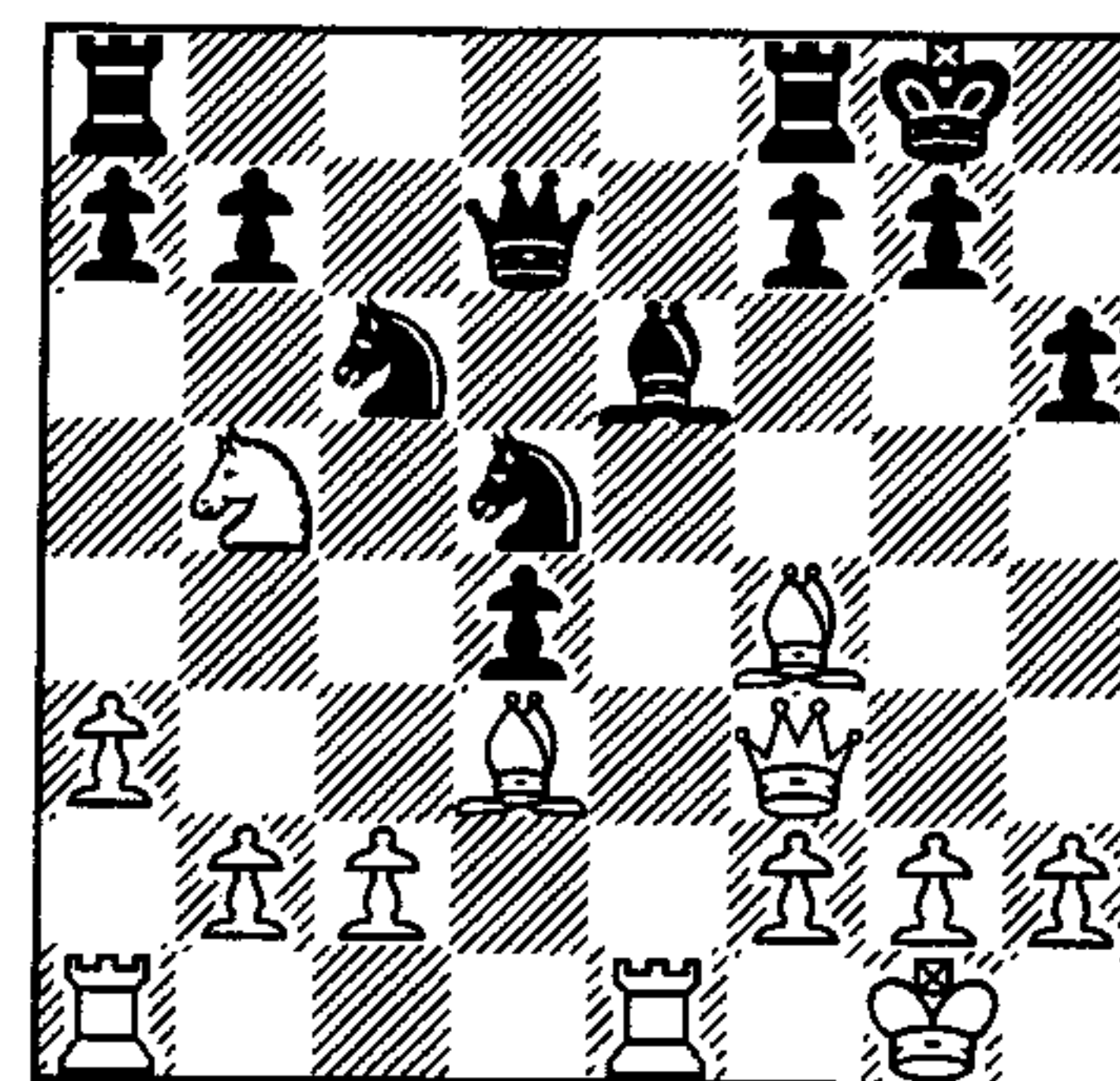
CHAPTER THREE

Defining Weaknesses

All positional chess is in some respect related to the existence of weaknesses in either your or the opponent's position. However, it is surprising how many players know little about defining weaknesses and how to relate to them. In this chapter I will provide some examples of what a weakness is, and some ground rules about how weaknesses can be defined.

Take a look at the following position:

Timoshenko-Chernov
Bucharest 1993



This is a position where the definition of weaknesses mainly concerns

pawns. The three weaknesses are d4, c2 and b2, Black's pawn being very weak. Due to the placement of the minor pieces Black is, in fact, already losing. The c2-pawn is not so weak thanks to the protection it receives from the bishop. Note that it is an important detail that this bishop is very well placed where it stands. In principle the b2-pawn is a little bit weak as it is without any defence. But here a main rule comes into play – *A weakness is only weak if it can be exploited/attacked.* Here the weakness of b2 is not so important because none of Black's pieces is currently able to attack it. So both c2 and b2 could be weak according to theoretical definitions but, in practice, they are not. Only d4 is weak, and mainly so because so many white pieces are ready to attack it.

As we shall see in the game Black also has some problems with his king-side in view of the two bishops pointing in that direction. White cannot justify an attack on the king at the moment but all weaknesses will count at one time or

other. In fact White undermined his opponent's weaknesses.

16 ♖e5 ♜xe5 17 ♝xe5 ♞e7?

After this move White has an easy way to simultaneously exploit both the weakness of Black's king and the vulnerable d4-pawn with the aid of a double threat. Of course only one target can be addressed.

18 ♜e4! ♝fd8 19 ♜h7+ ♔f8 20 ♜h8+ ♞g8 21 ♝ae1

White's attack is irresistible. After 21...a6 (or any other waiting move) White has the following decisive attack: 22 ♖h7 ♔e7 23 ♝xe6+! fxe6 24 ♜xg7+ etc. Instead Black tries to prevent this, intending to defend the knight on g8 with... f7-f6. With this in mind White reacts with a little combination.

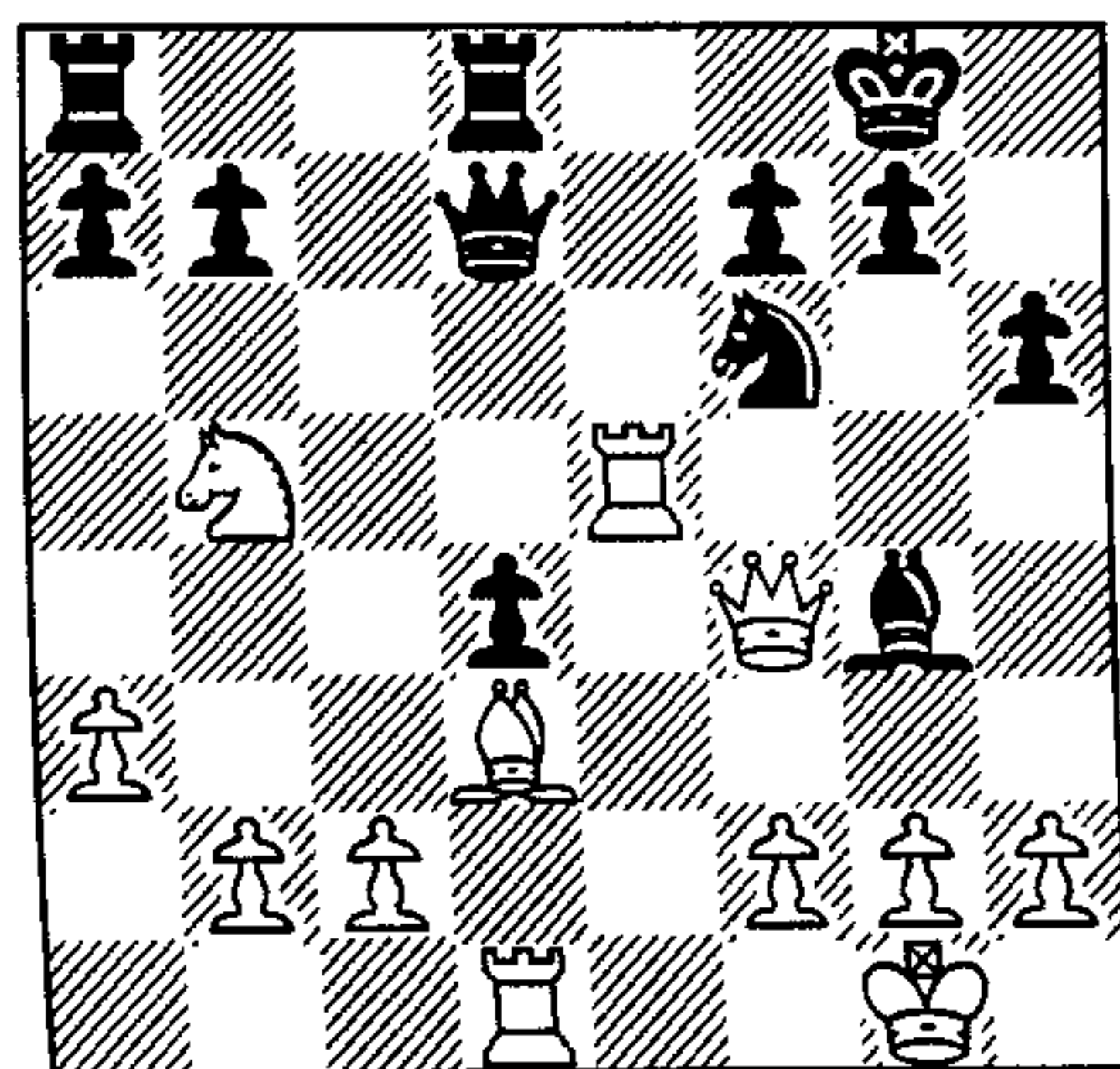
21...♖d5 22 ♝xd5! ♜xd5 23 ♞c7 ♜d7 24 ♖h7 1-0

In a more recent game Black defended slightly better:

Bromann-Raetsky

Denmark 2002

17...♞f6 18 ♜f4 ♝fd8 19 ♝d1 ♖g4



20 ♝de1?!

Here White could have exploited the weakness with 20 f3 ♖e6 21 ♔h1 ♖h8 22 ♖f1 and the d4-pawn is lost.

20...♖e6

After 20...a6 21 ♝e7 ♝e8 Black tries to profit from White's ostensibly weak back rank, but calculation proves that after 22 ♝xe8 ♝xe8 23 ♝xe8 ♜xe8 24 ♞xd4 ♜e1+ 25 ♖f1 ♞e4 26 ♜e3 Black is a pawn down in the endgame without compensation.

21 ♝d1 ♖g4 22 ♝de1?

Again 22 f3 would be good, winning the d-pawn. For some reason White chose not to weaken the diagonal down to his king, but exact calculation, as well as the absence of a dark-squared bishop in his opponent's arsenal, should have convinced him to take the pawn. Now the game went on for another 134 moves, with winning chances for both players...

This example mainly concerned weak pawns. Indeed technical positions often relate chiefly to the weakness of pawns. But we also saw the weakness of the back rank (a check was annoying in one line) and the weakness of the king (♜h7+ decided the first game).

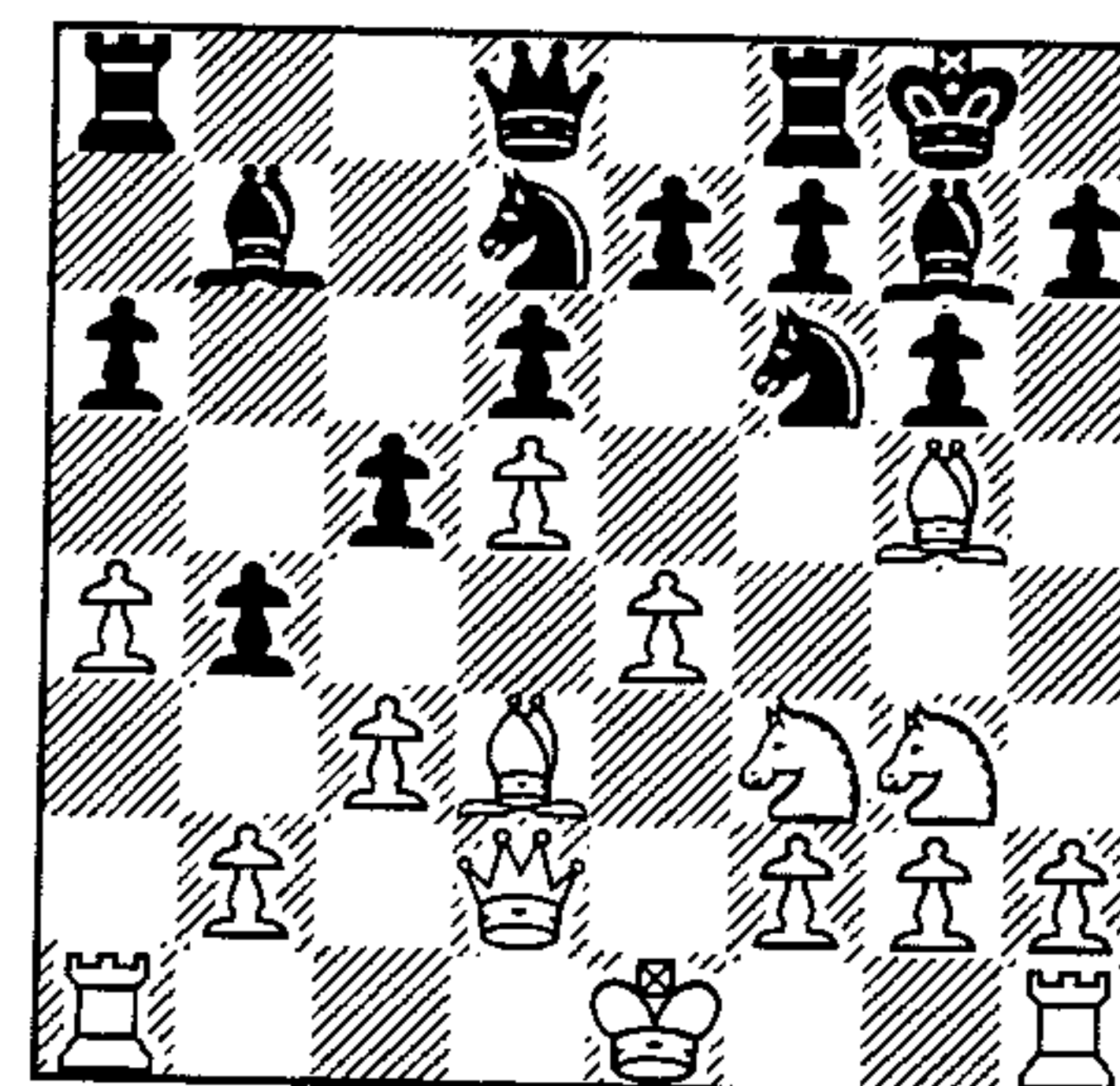
One thing is clear from all of this: *Weaknesses are always defined according to the pieces that remain on the board.* Nimzowitsch pointed out many years ago that the domination of an open file has little importance if all pieces have been exchanged.

In the following example Black seizes control of the centre and eliminates one of his own weaknesses by accepting doubled pawns. This is an excellent example of how tactics and positional

goals can unite in a great display of chess.

Videki-Hillarp Persson

Budapest 1996



In this position the weakest spots in White's camp are the pawns on b2 and c3, the latter being under direct pressure from the b4-pawn. It is important to note that the fall of the c3-pawn would lead to further losses for White.

12...c4!

Black needs to act quickly in view of the temporary nature of the weakness. Given the opportunity, White's next move would have been 13 c4!, keeping the queenside pawn structure intact. This would be followed by b2-b3 (after moving the rook away from the long diagonal), leaving the rest of the battle to be carried out on the kingside.

13 ♖c2?

13 ♖xc4 bxc3 14 bxc3 (14 ♜xc3 ♞xe4) 14...♝c8 can be very awkward for White because 15 ♖d3 ♞xd5! sees Black win at least a pawn. But White can try a move like 15 ♖b3!? with the idea of 15...♞xd5 16 ♖xd5! and compensation for the queen. Overall White had to go for something like this, for he now faces

positional ruin.

13...b3 14 ♖d1 ♞c5 15 ♖xf6 exf6!

After this slightly unusual recapture e4 is a weakness, and we have a good reason why black did not give a check on d3.

16 ♖e2 ♝e8 17 ♖xc4 ♞xe4 18 ♞xe4 ♝xe4+ 19 ♖e2 ♜e8 20 ♞d4 f5 21 ♞c6 ♖h6 22 ♜d1 a5 23 ♔f1 ♝xe2!

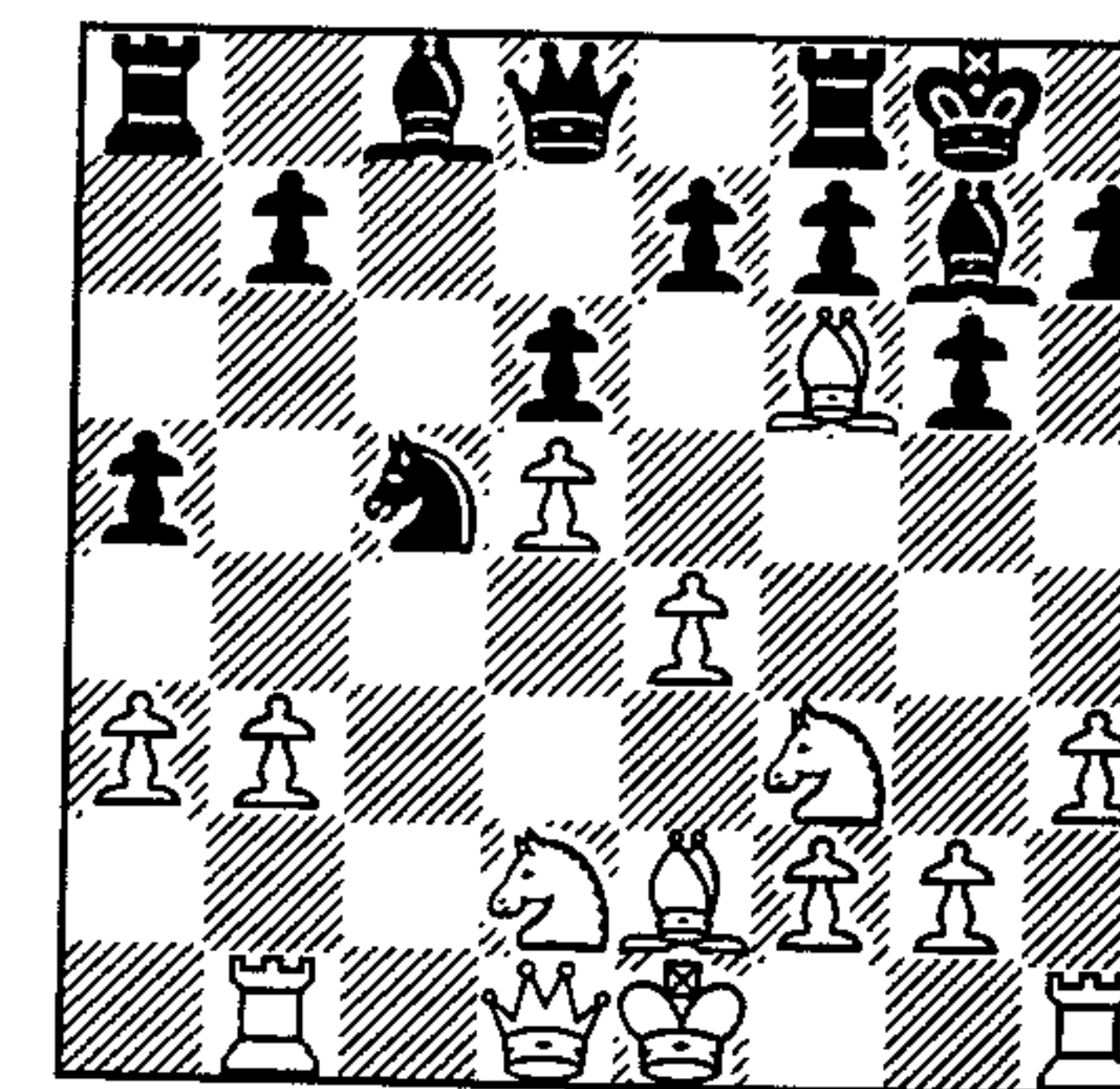
Taking over the initiative and the two bishops. White seems to be lost here.

24 ♜xe2 ♖a6 25 c4 ♜xe2+ 26 ♔xe2 ♖xc4+ 27 ♔d1 ♔f8 28 ♞d4 ♖xd5 29 f3 ♖e3 30 ♞b5 ♝c8 31 ♝e1 f4 32 ♞a3 ♖b7 33 ♝xe3 fxe3 34 ♔e2 ♖a6+ 35 ♔xe3 ♝e8+ 36 ♔d2 ♝e2+ 37 ♔c3 ♝xg2 38 ♞b5 ♝xh2 39 ♝d1 ♔e7 0-1

The next example has some similarities – which should be quite obvious.

Fehér-Titov

Budapest 1990



Here Black is fully justified in recapturing with the pawn – opening the e-file, getting a square for the c8-bishop with the break ...f6-f5 and, as a result, simultaneously eliminating White's cen-

tre. Again the weakness of White's queenside is worsened by the introduction of the bishops. At the same time d3 is exposed as a potentially weak square in the white camp. Notice that this square is weak only because of the well-placed knight on c5. Black won the game easily:

15...exf6! 16 0-0 f5 17 b4?

Black was, of course, a lot better anyway, but after this move he is just winning.

17...dxe4 18 ♖b3 dxc3 19 ♖be1 a4 20 ♖c4 d7 21 ♖f4 ♖c8 22 d3 ♖f6 23 dxc4 b5 24 dxd6 dxd3 25 dxc8 ♖xc8 0-1

Weaknesses obviously have a major importance in the middlegame, and this is indeed a book about the middlegame but, usually, their creation is in the middlegame and their exploitation is in the endgame. One of these endgames is that of opposite coloured bishops, which people know remarkably little about despite the fact that there is not so much to know. Opposite coloured bishop endings are all about weaknesses, passed pawns and domination, as will be well illustrated by Black in the next example.

Donoso Velasco-Silva

Santiago 1994

Sicilian Defence

1 e4 c5 2 d3 dxc6 3 d4 cxd4 4 dxd4 g6 5 dxc3 d7 6 d3 d6 7 dxe2 0-0 8 0-0 d6 9 d3 g5 10 dxe6 11 f4 ♖e8 12 d3 a5 13 a4 ♖b6 14 d5?!

I do not like this move. After the ex-

change not only does the d5-pawn restrict the bishop but there are weaknesses on the queenside that did not exist a move earlier.

14...dxd5! 15 exd5 d4 16 c3?

16 ♖c1 was a lot better.

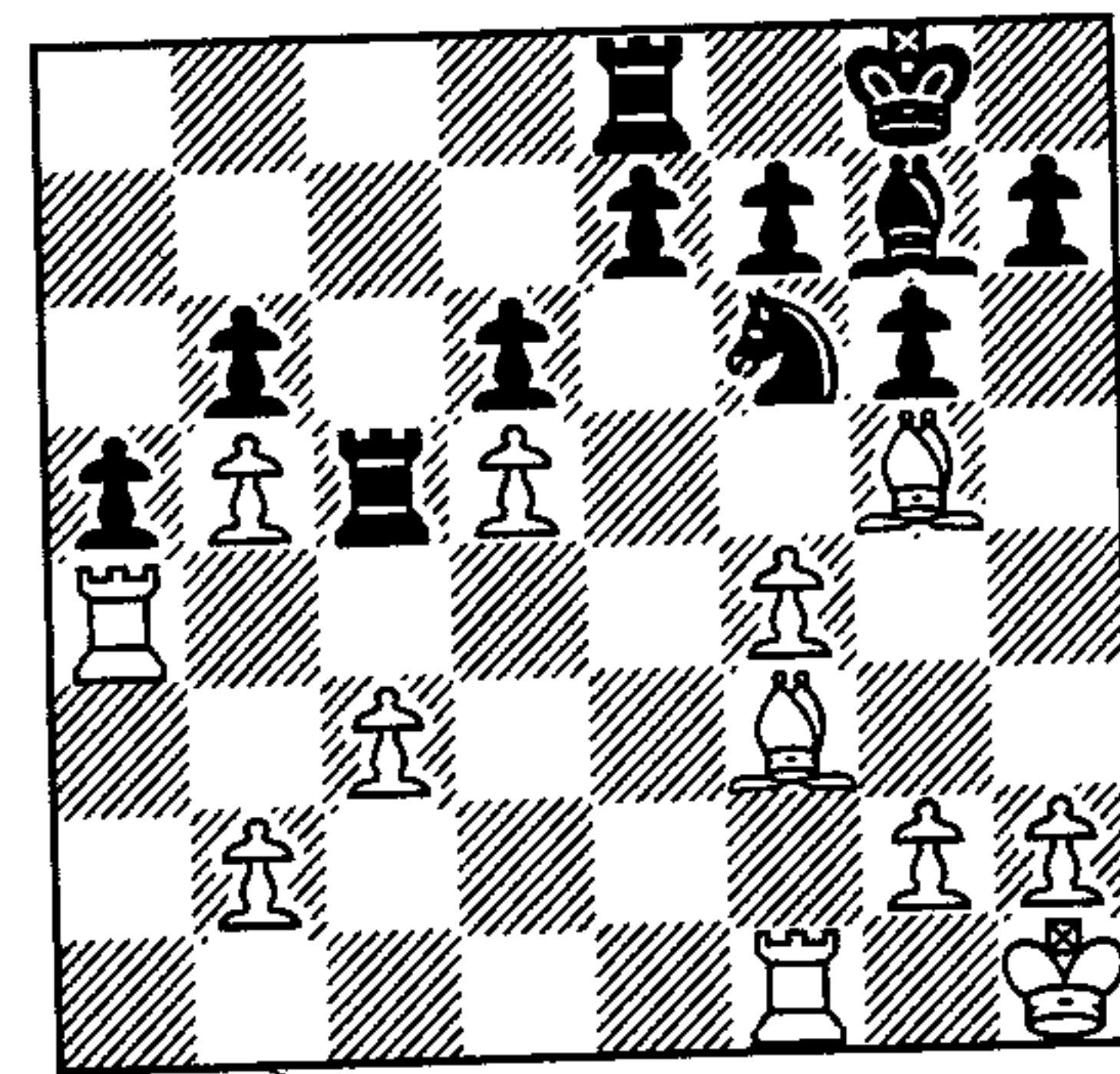
16...d3! 17 ♖xd3 ♖xb3 18 ♖b5?!

White has been careless for some moves and now he accepts a weak pawn on b5 which will either be lost or, as in the game, the cause of much misery. Instead an admittedly unattractive move such as 18 ♖fb1, intending 19 ♖a3, was probably necessary. But this just shows how poor White's prospects have become. Nevertheless, the solid nature of the position might still give White a chance to save the game.

18...♖xb5 19 axb5 b6 20 ♖a4

The rook is very much misplaced out here, although it is difficult to find another move. Now comes a very nice reply, the like of which is seen in many positions where there is nothing much going on.

20...♖c5!



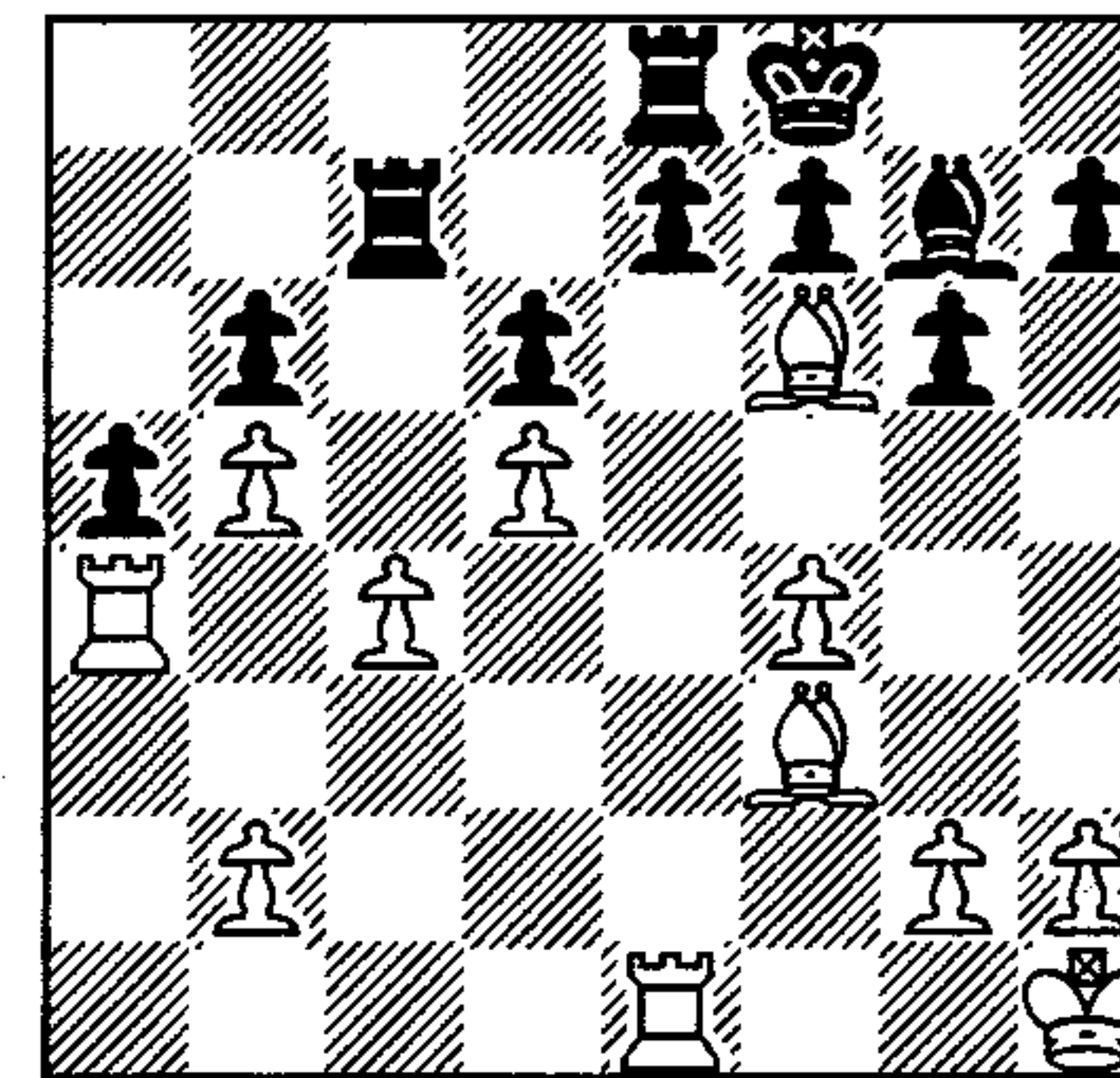
Black forces White to push the c-pawn, which creates new weaknesses that could prove problematic. *Because these weaknesses will persist for a very long*

time they are called permanent (or static) weaknesses. It is often the case that one player will invest time in order to induce permanent weaknesses in the enemy camp, as Black does here with 20...♖c5. 21 c4 ♖c7

Here Black could also have played 21...d7 to prevent the exchange on f6 and transfer the knight to c5. White would be in a bad way after 22 b3 ♖c7 23 ♖e1 dxc5 24 ♖a3 ♖f8 when his pieces are clearly not very well placed and his pawns are more susceptible to attack than Black's, and therefore weak. 22 ♖e1 ♖f8

White elects to enter an opposite coloured bishop ending which, unfortunately, is close to losing.

23 dxf6?!



23 b3 d7 24 ♖a3 dxc5 would have transposed to the note to Black's 21st move.

23...exf6!!

This recapture is probably rather obvious if we retrace our steps and look at the previous examples, but I am sure that most players would have played 23...dxf6 on auto-pilot. The different advantages of the text will become apparent, one by one, as we progress

through the game. The immediate advantage is the opening of the e-file.

24 ♖xe8+ ♖xe8 25 g3

In a fabulous article entitled *From the Simple to the Complex* in the book *Technique for the Tournament Player*, Mark Dvoretsky explains that the side trying to win an opposite coloured bishop ending should try to place his pawns on the opposite colour of his bishop, while the side defending should try to place his pawns on the same colour as his bishop (p.89). The reason for this is that, effectively, the board is divided into two 'camps' of equal size: light and dark squares. To win the game you need to take over some enemy territory, and to advance a pawn you need to cross just as many light as dark squares. A common defensive set-up in endings with opposite coloured bishops is that of a fortress. The idea is simple – the bishop and a limited number of pawns can be enough to gain full control of over half of the board and, in doing so, prevent the remaining pawns from advancing. To win you have to avoid this situation and create passed pawns. The only way to do this is to fight the bishop.

In this example 25 f5 ♖e7! 26 ♖a1 ♖e3 would give Black a winning position thanks to his well-placed rook. But after 25 g4! White would probably be better off than in the game. The double thrust of the pawn is logical since it addresses Black's next, after which Black has a lasting positional advantage on the kingside.

25...f5

The weaknesses in Black's kingside pawn structure are f7 and h7, but there

is obviously no way for White to attack these, so Black can manoeuvre freely. The same cannot be said for White, whose Achilles Heel is the h2-pawn. Note that Black's pawn is far more useful on f7 than e7.

26 b3 ♖e7 27 b4?

After this I have no faith White's position. Black gets a passed pawn and a passage for the king to penetrate the queenside. As we shall see it would probably be better to just lose the pawn.

White could activate the rook with 27 ♖a2! ♖e1+ 28 ♔g2 ♖b1 29 ♖e2+ ♔d7 30 ♖e3 ♔d4 31 ♖d3 ♔c5 when Black clearly has the advantage but still has to find a winning plan.

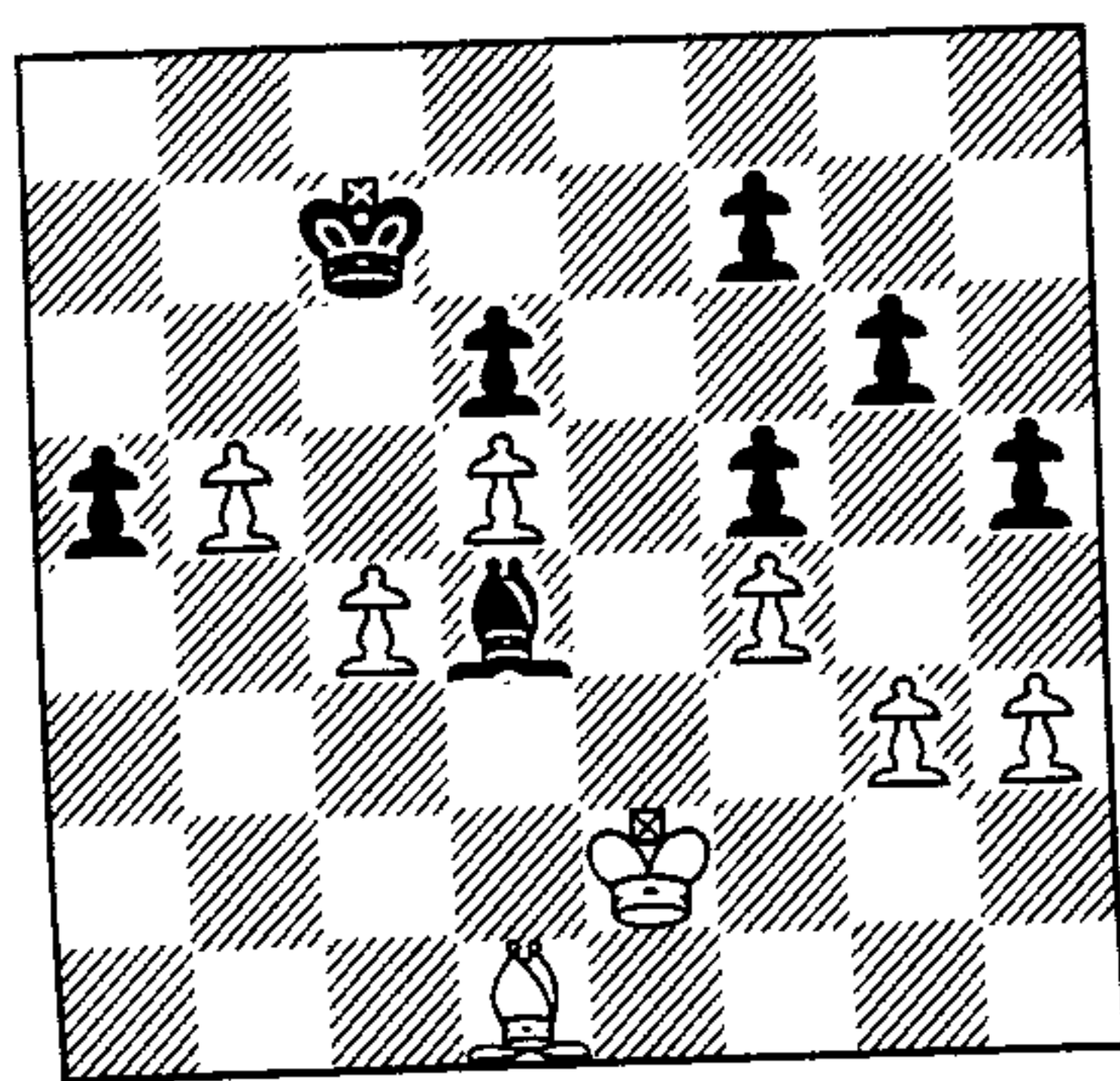
27...♖e1+ 28 ♔g2 ♔c3 29 bxa5 bxa5 30 ♖a2

30 c5 dxc5 31 ♖c4 ♔d4 offers White no hope.

30...♔d7 31 ♔f2 ♖a1! 32 ♖xa1 ♔xa1 33 ♔d1 ♔d4+ 34 ♔e2 ♔c7

34...♔g1 35 ♔f1 ♔xh2 36 ♔g2 is obviously too soon, but the white king cannot effort to step further away.

35 h3 h5



Although level in terms of material the situation is beyond salvation for White. The weakness of the kingside as

well as the passed pawn on the other flank combine to be decisive. The funny thing is that if there were a black pawn on b6 the game would probably still be drawn because White would defend his weakness on g3 while infiltration by the king on the queenside is not possible. Black does have a plan involving ...f7-f6, ...g6-g5 and ...h5-h4 but whether this is enough to win the game is not clear. I would guess not. The position would not count as that of two weaknesses as the immobility of the king is also a weakness.

As it is the position counts as one of two weaknesses – more of this below.

36 ♔d3 ♔g1

36...♔f2! was even stronger. But White lets Black create a passed pawn on the kingside anyway, so there was no reason to force him to do it.

37 g4 fxg4 38 hxg4 h4

Two distant passed pawns are enough to win.

39 f5 g5 40 ♔c3 ♔b6 41 ♔b3 ♔c5 42 ♔a4 ♔b6 43 ♔f3 ♔d4!

Before infiltrating with the king Black improves his bishop to an ideal square.

44 ♔h1 ♔f6 45 ♔g2 ♔d8 46 ♔h1 ♔c5 47 ♔b3 ♔d4 48 ♔g2 ♔b6 49 ♔h1 f6 50 ♔g2 ♔e3 0-1

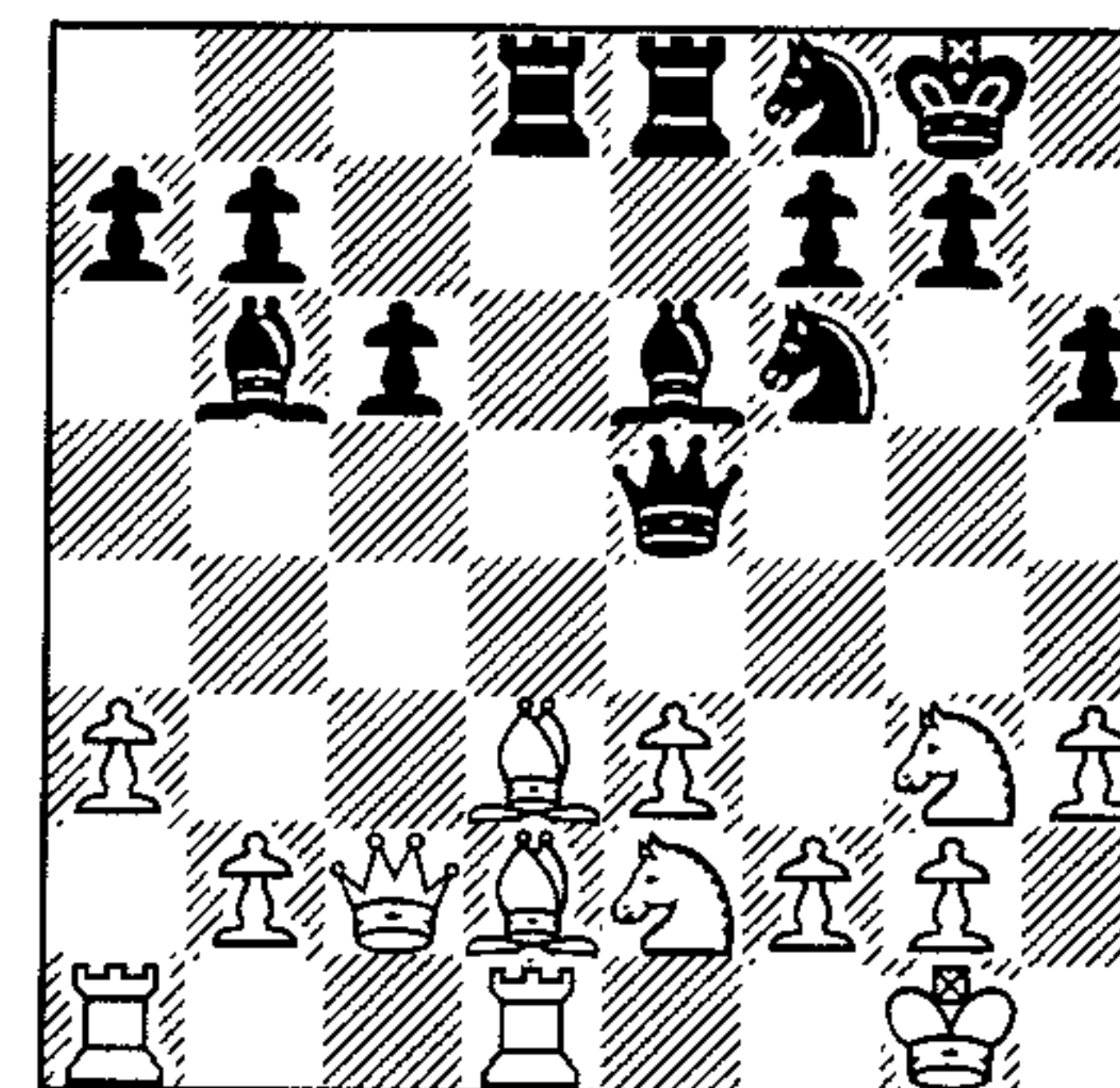
Creation of Weaknesses

An important part of positional play is to create permanent weaknesses in the opponent's camp. The idea is that in a position with many weaknesses the defending side will be so busy defending that the protection of the accumulated weaknesses will eventually prove impossible to carry out. This is why we often see strong players not trying to win

weak pawns immediately but instead allowing them to survive until they can be picked up without having to make concessions.

The following examples are typical.

Karpov-Lautier Dortmund 1995



Nothing seems to be going on in this position. Now Karpov starts what is a standard plan in these kind of Queen's Gambit positions – the *minority attack*. The idea is really simple. By advancing his two pawns on the queenside White aims to create a weakness among Black's pawn majority. In this way White can create a target on which to focus his offensive operations, while Black has problems creating anything on the kingside, where White is well represented.

20 b4! ♔g6 21 a4

White is now threatening to create a weakness with a4-a5-a6, which will undermine the support of the c6-pawn.

21...a6

21...♔c7! is a possible improvement. The idea is that White wants to see what Black is doing before he selects a pawn advance. After 22 a5 Black would then

have 22...a6!, blockading the pawns, whereafter b4 is a potential weakness. And 22 b5 would then be met with 22...cxb5 23 axb5 ♔b6 with a playable position.

22 ♔c3 ♖g5 23 ♔d4!

Typical Karpov. Before he carries out his own plan he makes a slight improvement to his position. Here he exploits the enemy queen's lack of breathing space to improve his pieces and exchange Black's only defender of the queenside, thus facilitating the execution of the minority attack.

23...♔xd4 24 ♔xd4 ♔d5 25 e4 ♔e6 26 ♔f3 ♖f4 27 b5!

Now it is time. After this break Black is doomed to finding himself with a weak pawn on the queenside.

27...axb5 28 axb5 ♔e5

Probably Black should have changed the course of the game here with 28...♔xh3!? 29 e5 ♔xg2 30 ♔xg2 ♔xe5 31 ♔xe5 ♖xe5 with compensation for the sacrificed piece. I have a feeling that white is still slightly better, but I think that the game is quickly spiralling out of control for Black, and immediate action was needed.

29 ♔xe5 ♖xe5 30 bxc6 bxc6 31 ♖ac1

The minority attack has been executed to perfection. Black is left with a weak c-pawn, to which his forces will be tied in defensive duties. Karpov makes the most of his advantage thanks to excellent technique.

31...♔d6 32 ♖c3 ♔d7 33 ♔e2!

A forcing line, leading to problems for Black's bishop.

33...♔xd1+ 34 ♔xd1 ♖xc3 35 ♖xc3 ♖c8 36 f4 f6 37 ♔e2!

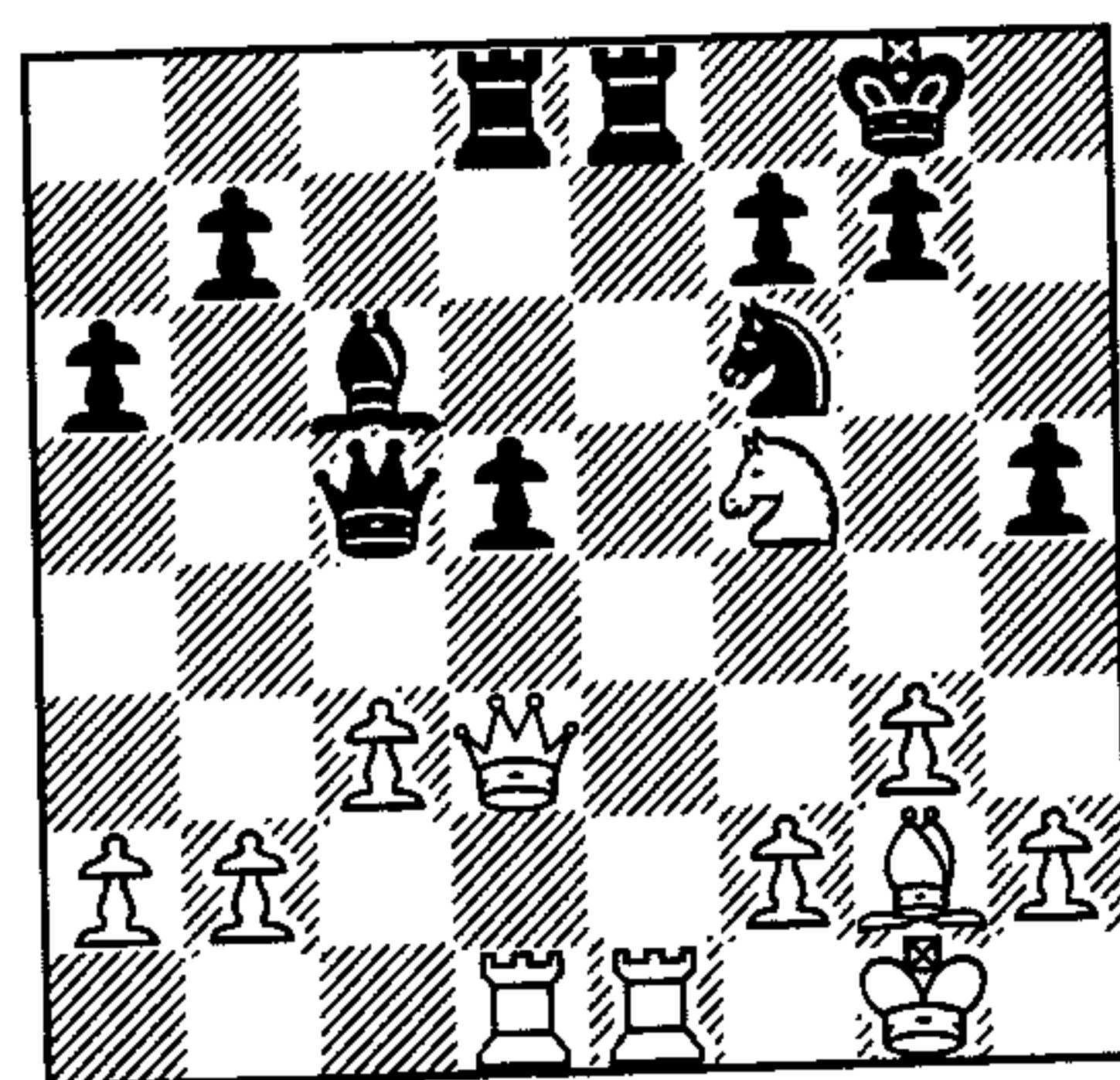
Improving the worst placed piece. Black is probably lost already.

37...c5 38 ♖d4 ♕f7 39 ♗g4 ♜e8
40 ♖b5 ♖b6 41 ♖d6 ♖a4 42 ♜a3
♜a8 43 e5 ♗d5 44 e6 1-0

Black resigned in view of 44...♔f8 45 ♜e3! ♜a7 46 ♖c8 etc.

From one of my own games:

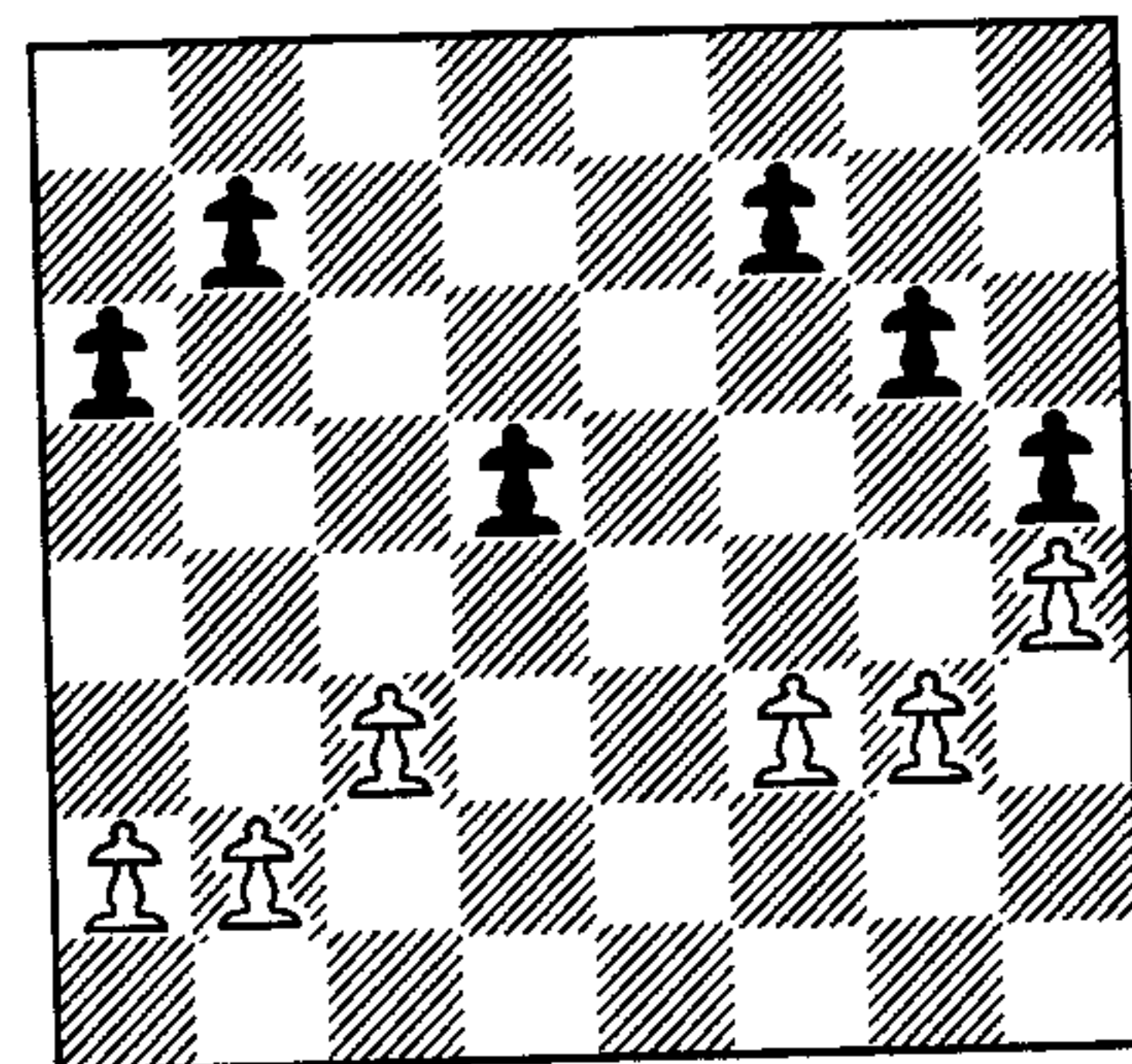
Aagaard-S.B.Hansen
Copenhagen 1997



In this position Black has just pushed with 29...h5?!, intending to generate counterplay on the kingside. This move is poor for two reasons. First there is 30 ♖d2!? with the idea of 31 ♖g5, illustrating how abandoning the g5-square has led to the weakening of the g7-square, thereby endangering the king. This is a weakness, of course, only in view of the well placed knight on f5, and probably not the worst downside to 29...h5.

A bigger problem is that in the long run White will be able to create a passed pawn on the kingside. Consequently I played a move that, after the game, my opponent claimed was a mistake. A move he did not understand. However, as we shall see, my evaluation of the position was probably correct.

I chose to exchange queens and go into an endgame, predicting the following pawn formation:



Here White will be able to create a second weakness in the enemy camp when he wants, for after g3-g4 he will either exchange on h5 to leave a weak pawn there or he will himself make an outside passed pawn, which, indeed, does count as a weakness. Actually I think the rule would be easier to understand if it was called the *rule of two advantages*. Here it is of great importance that the bishops remaining on the board operate on the light squares. If they were dark-squared the h4-pawn would be weak.

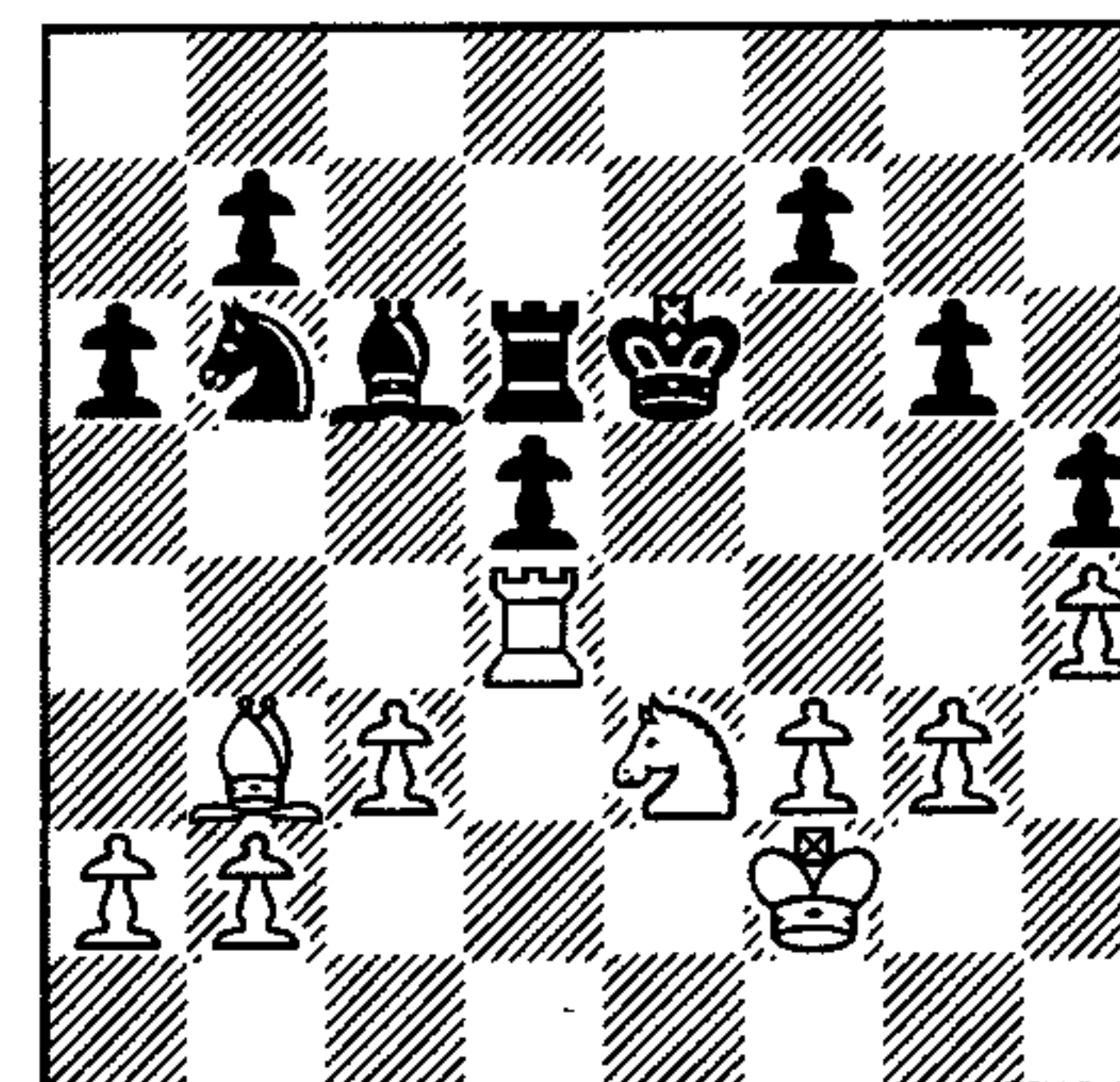
The idea of the rule of two weaknesses is that, in order to win in the endgame your opponent needs to have two weaknesses. I have said that this should be called two advantages because having a passed pawn or an active king also counts. In fact everything that could be important seems to count. This makes the rule a bit fuzzy, but it still has great practical use. Of course one weakness is occasionally enough, but in the majority of cases it is the right strategy to induce a second weakness in

the opponent's camp before setting about exploiting the first.

30 ♖d4! ♖xd4

Black has no good squares for the queen so the coming endgame is practically inevitable.

31 ♖xd4 ♗a4 32 ♜c1 ♔f8 33 f3 ♖d7 34 ♔f2 ♖c5 35 ♗f1 ♗d7 36 ♜xe8+ ♜xe8 37 ♜d1 ♖a4 38 ♜d2 g6 39 ♗e2 ♖b6 40 h4 ♜e7 41 ♗d3 ♔g7 42 ♖c2 ♜e8 43 ♖e3 ♗c6 44 ♗e2 ♔f6 45 ♜d4 ♔e6 46 ♗d1 ♜d8 47 ♗b3 ♜d6



White has now positioned his forces in the best possible way. The d5-pawn is under considerable pressure and Black must constantly watch out for the break with c3-c4. All of this makes it the appropriate time to create a second weakness, this time on the kingside.

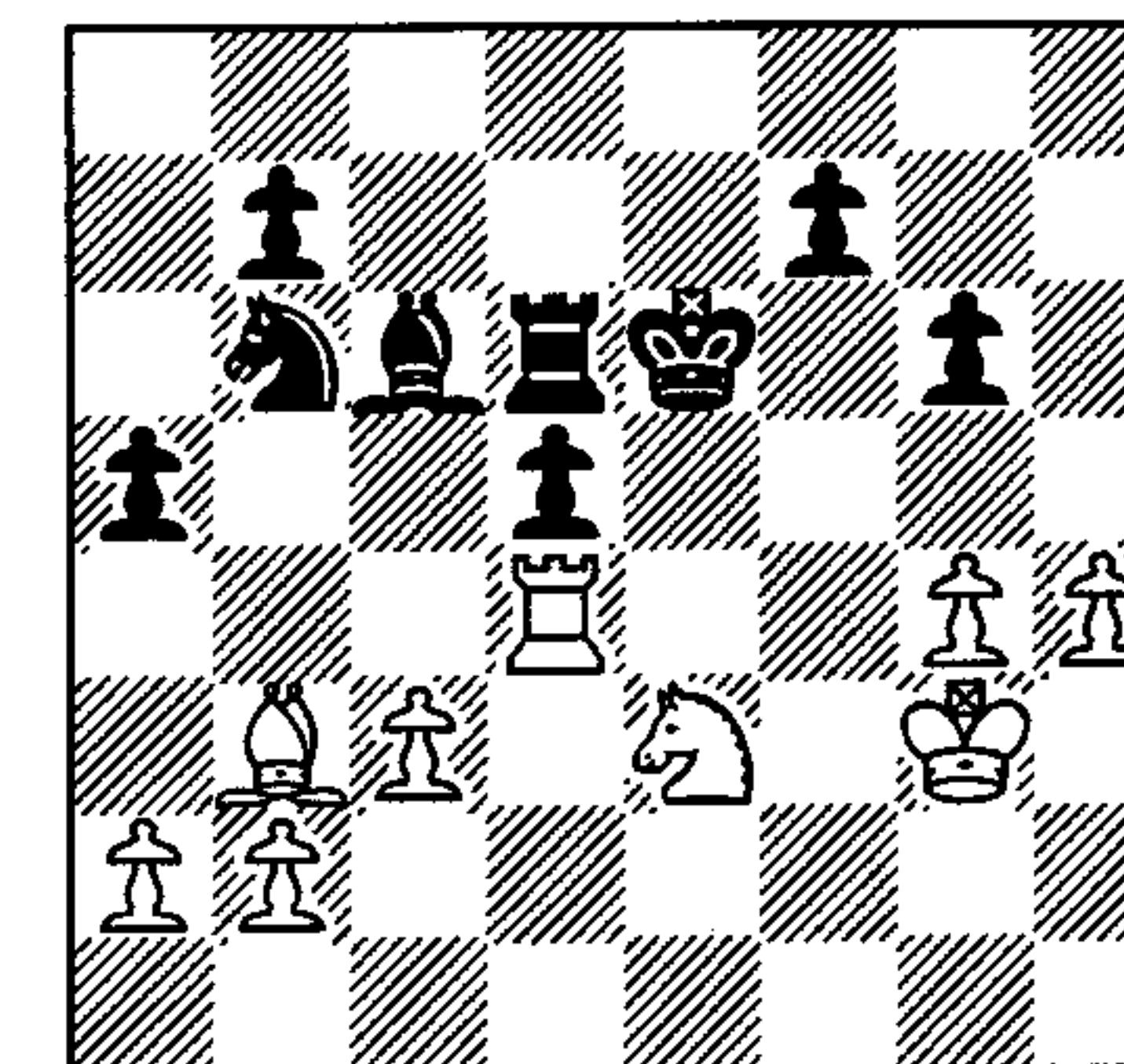
48 g4! hxg4 49 fxg4 a5

Black is tired of waiting and seeks active counterplay. In practice this makes a real difference, although it does not change the evaluation of the position. To alter the direction of play is essential for Black.

50 ♔g3!?

I allow Black to generate counterplay on the queenside at the cost of a pawn,

as I did not believe that this would in any way be sufficient to counter the threats on the kingside and in the centre.



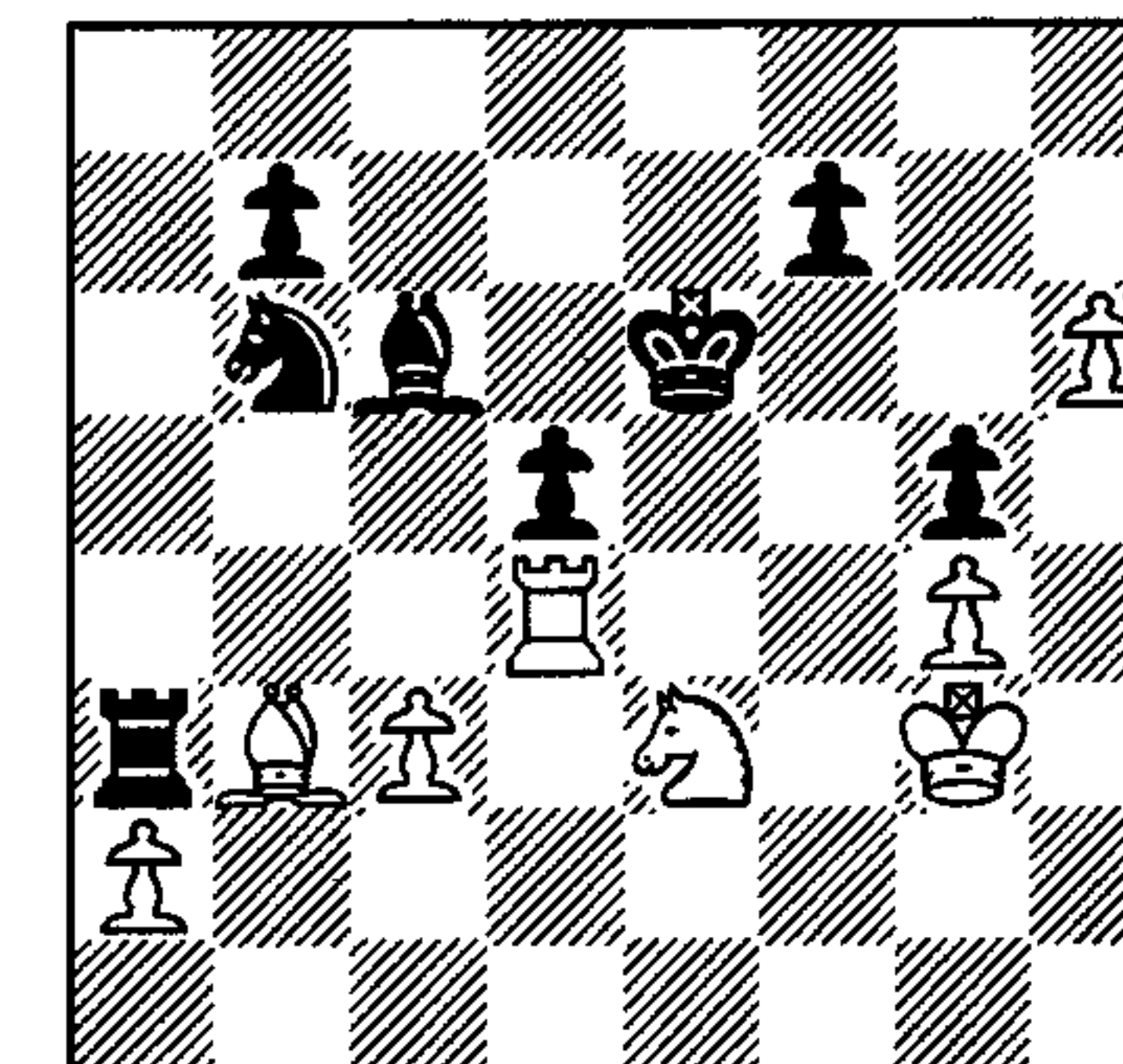
50...a4 51 ♗c2 a3!?

Otherwise the a-pawn might also be weak, sooner or later.

52 bxa3 ♜d8 53 ♗b3 ♜a8 54 h5 ♜xa3 55 h6

With the threat of 56 g5! etc.

55...g5



56 ♜d1?

Not throwing away all of the advantage but missing an easy win. After 56 ♜b4! ♖d7 57 c4! Black has no good moves left and will soon find himself in a completely hopeless situation.

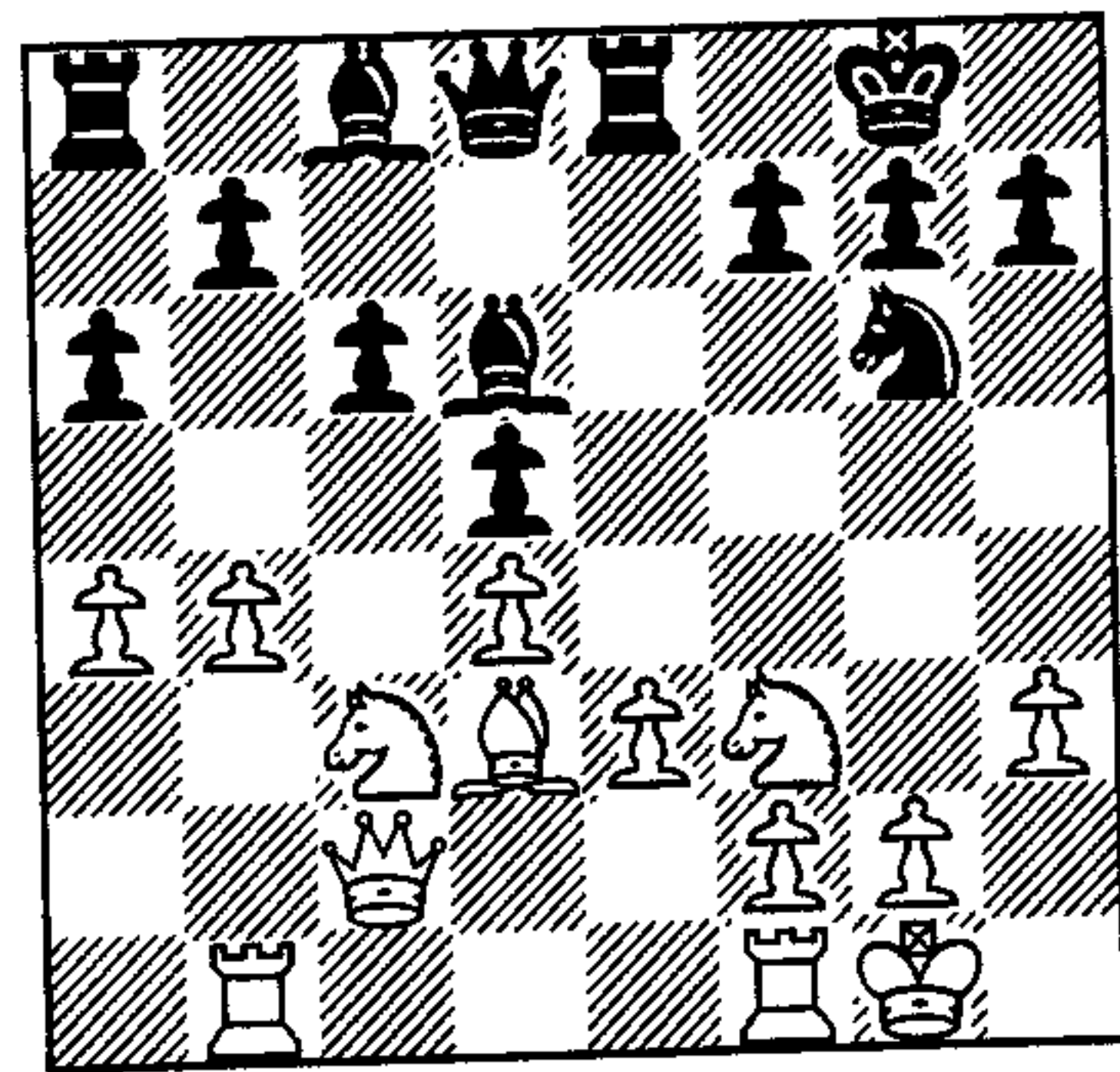
56...♜a8 57 ♜f1 ♜h8 58 ♖f5 ♗d7

59 ♖c2 ♗e5 60 ♜h1?

Another grim mistake. After 60 ♜e1+ ♗f6 61 ♔g7! ♕e6 62 ♔h5+ ♗e7 63 ♜b1 ♔d7 64 h7, as given by Donev, White still has a large advantage due to his passed pawn. I feel that Black does have genuine chances to save the game here but this line was still the only winning try. I would have played it had I seen 61 ♔g7!, obviously.

60...♕xf5! 61 ♕xf5 ♖a4 62 h7 ♔xc3 63 ♗f3 ½-½

Koneru-Ioseliani
India 2002



In this position White played the very strong 16 ♕f5! and claimed an advantage. Humpy Koneru writes the following in *New In Chess*: 'Although all Black's queenside pawns are on light squares, Black's light-squared bishop is useful to protect the potential weakness on c6.' This simple point is the logic behind India's strongest female player. She is indeed right, and won the game in comfortable style.

Permanent versus Temporary Advantages

This heading could be the theme of a full book! Here I will just give a brief

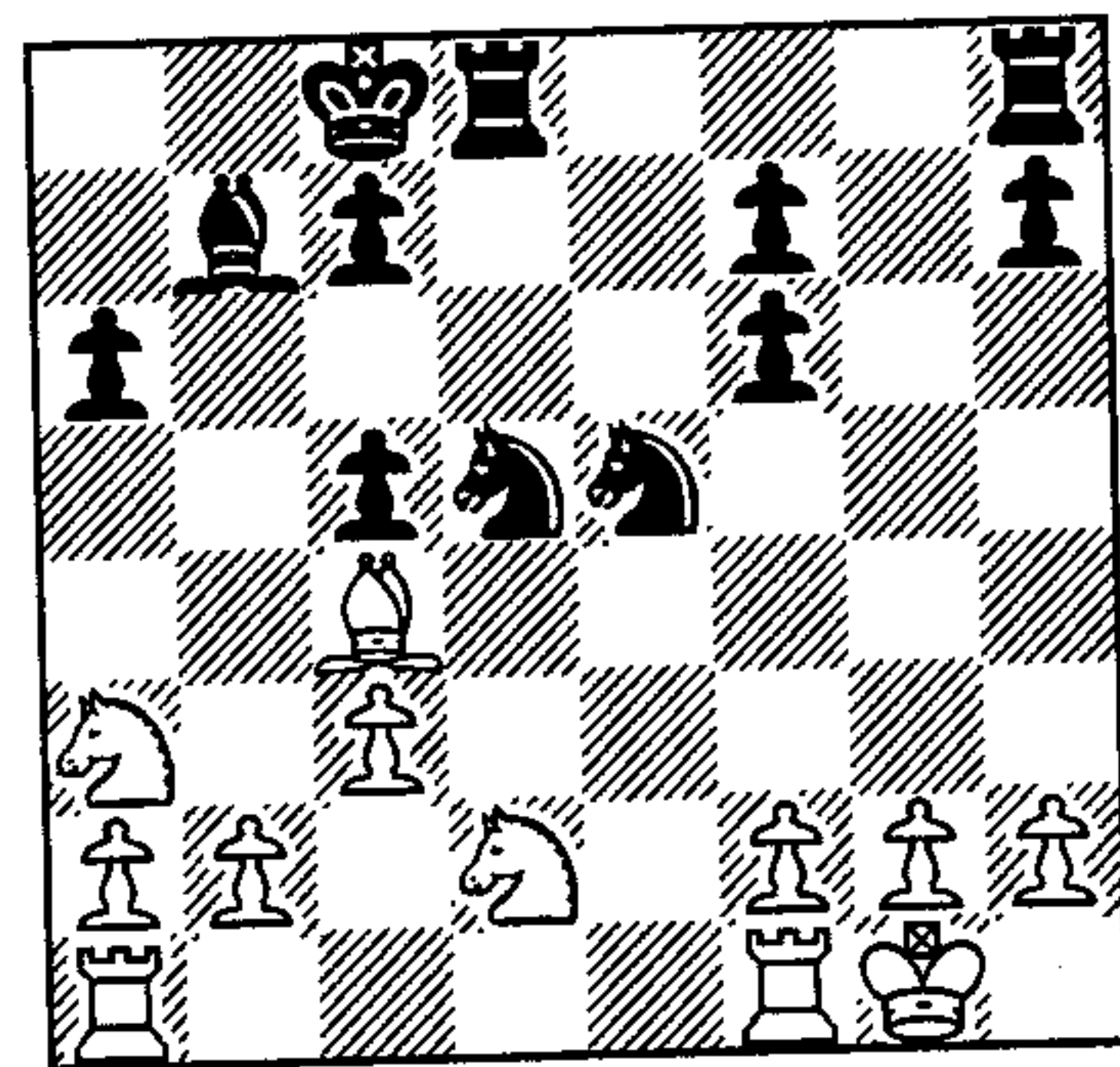
example of how these two kinds of advantages contradict each other.

Boe-Aagaard
Denmark 1992
Scotch Game

1 e4 e5 2 ♖f3 ♖c6 3 d4 exd4 4 ♔xd4 ♕c5 5 ♕e3 ♗f6 6 c3 ♔ge7 7 ♕c4 b6 8 0-0 ♕b7 9 ♔b5 0-0-0 10 ♕xc5 bxc5 11 ♔d2 a6 12 ♖a3 d5!?

After this move Black's pawn structure on the queenside is in ruins but the lead in development is also important.

13 exd5 ♔xd5 14 ♗f3 ♔e5! 15 ♗xf6 gxf6



Black has six (!) isolated pawns, two sets of doubled pawns and hardly any dark squares yet he might even be better here. The open files have no long-term value, neither has the threat of ...♔f4, but at the moment these factors fully compensate for the weaknesses. In fact this is quite common – one player has the long-term advantages and the other the short-term advantages. The game now ended in a draw:

16 ♕xd5 ♕xd5 17 f3 ♕xa2 18 ♔e4 ♕e6 19 ♔xc5 ♜d2 20 ♜f2 ♜hd8 21 ♜xd2 ♜xd2 22 ♔b5 ♕h3 ½-½

CHAPTER FOUR

Squares – And How Pieces Exploit Them

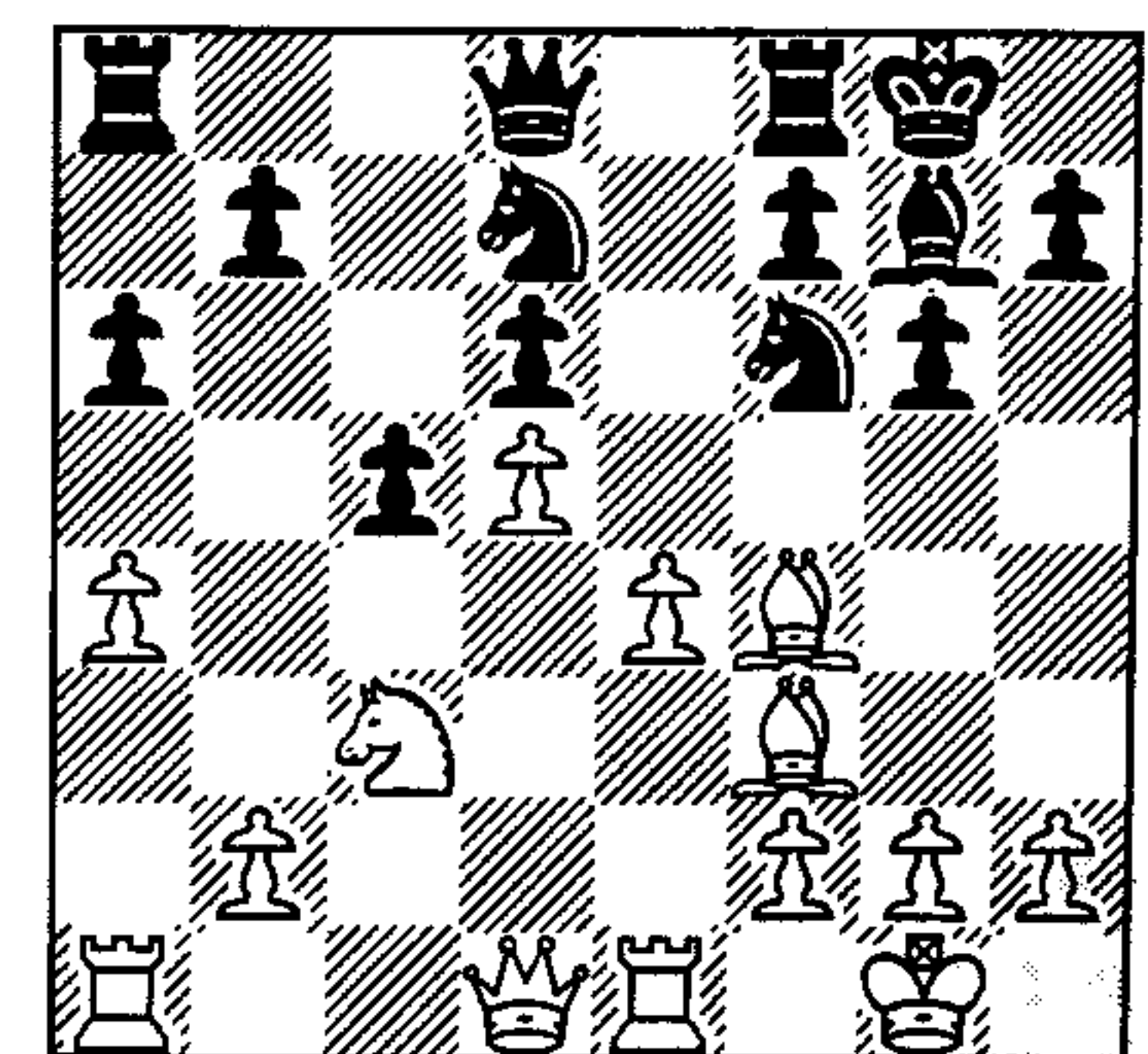
In this chapter I will feature a few basic truths about positional chess – aspects of the game in which I have seen rather capable players fail from time to time. I do not intend to provide a complete picture as I expect that a number of readers understand most of this already, but as the points in this chapter are essential and rather uncontroversial truths, I feel that we all should know them. So please read on when you feel I am insulting your intelligence.

ing it! This makes it more vulnerable than the rest of the pieces, and for this reason the knight usually needs a fixed strongpoint somewhere in the centre, from where it can exercise maximum pressure on the opponent's position. This kind of square is ideal if it is right in front of one of the opponent's pawns – in this way the knight can use the opponent's pawn as a shield from rooks and queens. A good example of this is the following:

Knights and Squares

The knight is the weakest of the minor pieces for a specific reason – it has no long-range possibilities. As control of the centre is a main part of positional chess it has been said that 'knights on the rim are dim' because only when a knight is near to the centre can it control squares in this busy area. Another characteristic of the knight that makes it weaker than other pieces is its silly walk (this is, of course, also its strength). Thanks to the way it moves around it can never take a piece that is threaten-

Mohr-Volokitin
Portoroz 2001



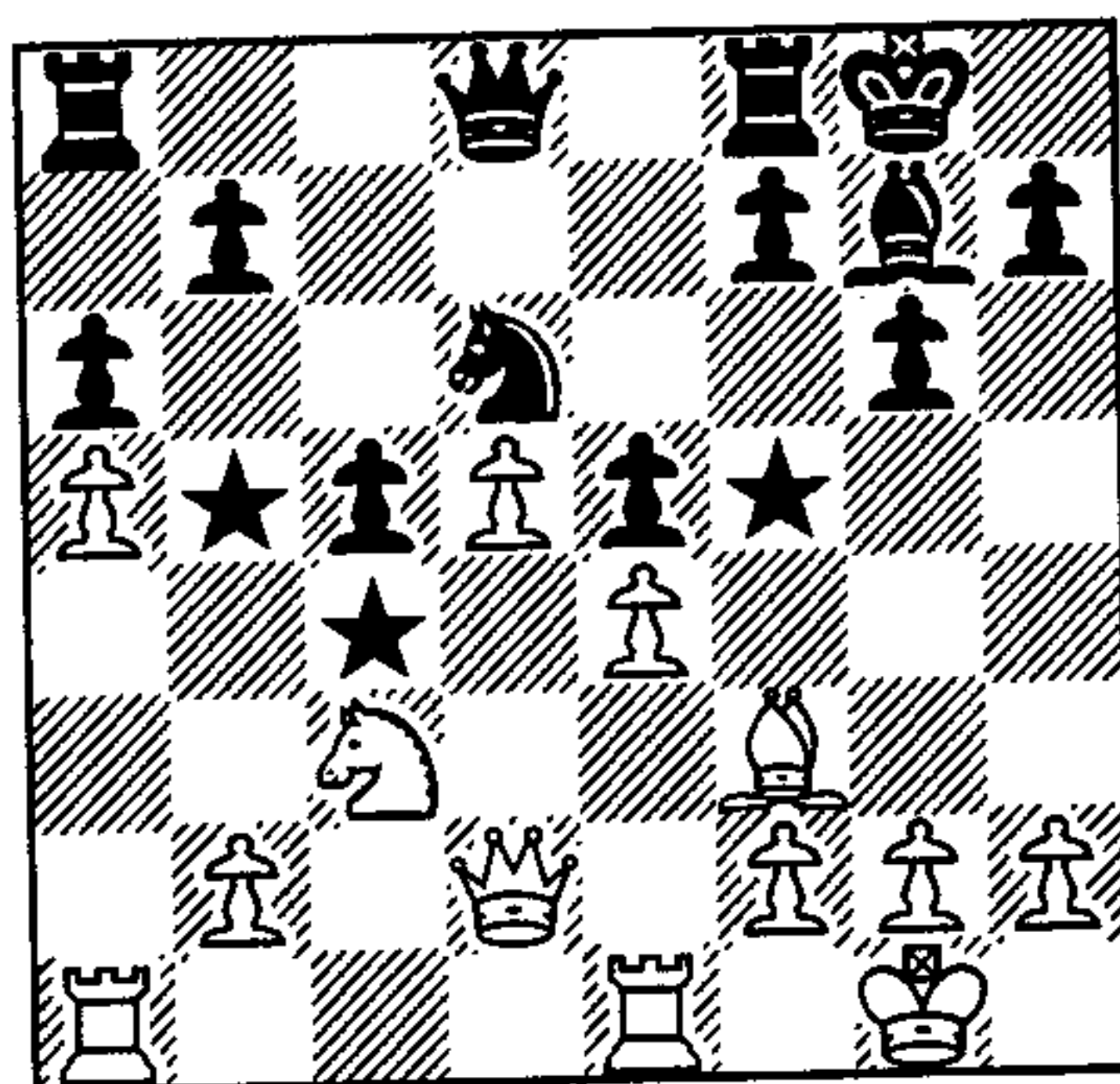
In this position Black played:
13...♘e5!?

This move has both good and bad points. The minuses are that the long diagonal for the bishop gets closed and White gets a protected passed pawn on d5. On the plus side White has to give up his two bishops (or lose a tempo), and the newly vacated d6-square becomes an ideal outpost for a knight, as can be seen in the next diagram. Which of these pluses and minuses is most important in this position is not obvious, even after seeing the rest of the game. A quieter move was 13...♖e7.

14 ♙xe5 dxe5 15 a5!

A strong positional move, designed not so much to prevent ...b7-b5 (which could be difficult to achieve) but rather to isolate the c-pawn from the rest of the queenside pawns, and thereby make it weak.

15...♘e8 16 ♖d2 ♘d6



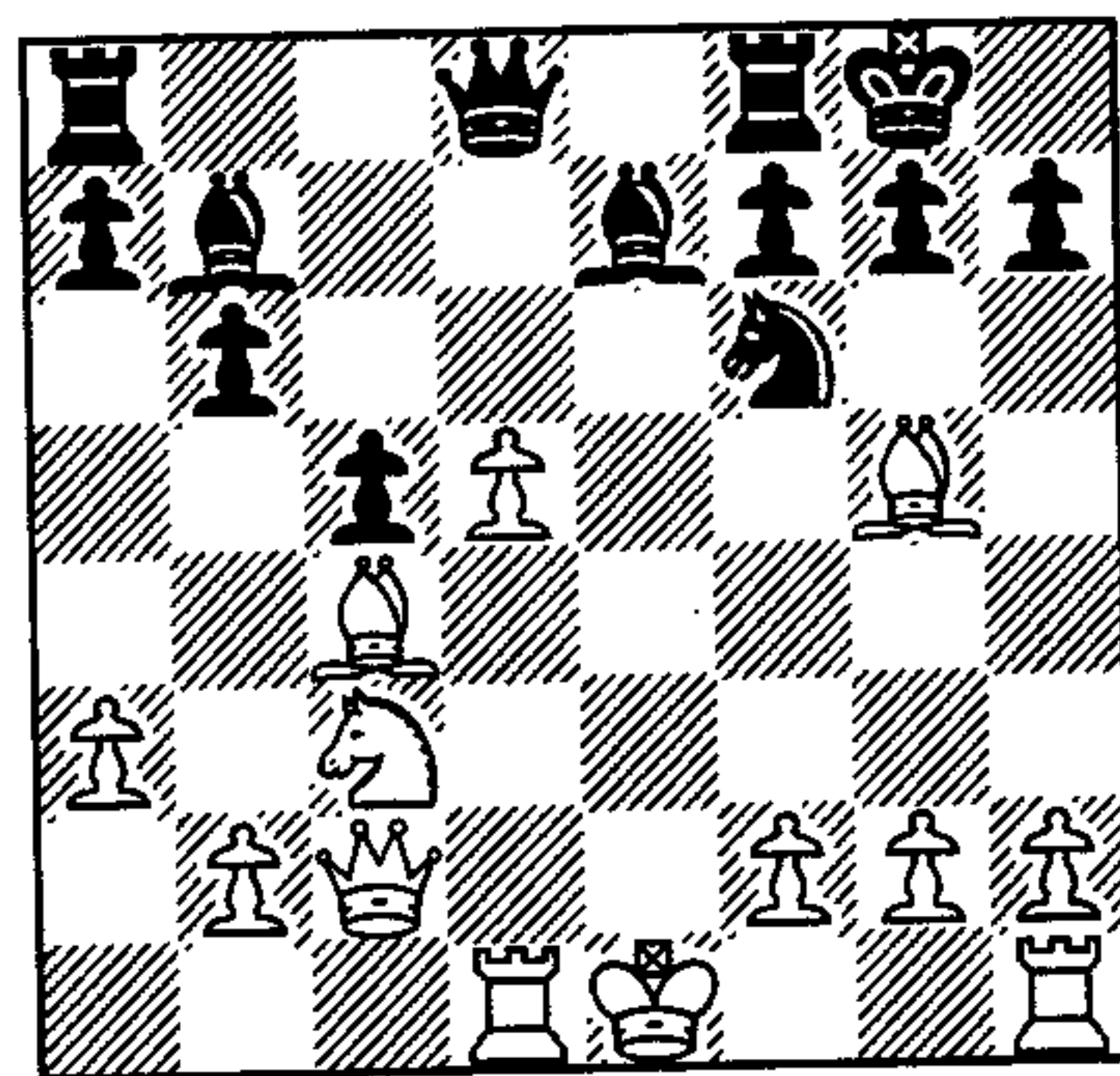
Here the black knight is as good as it gets. From d6 it exerts pressure on e4 and c4, as well as being able to help with the breaks ...b7-b5 and ...f7-f5. The game is probably somewhat balanced, with White, if anyone, a little better due to the weakness of the c-pawn.

17 ♖a4 ♜c8 18 ♜ac1 c4 19 ♘b6 ♜c7 20 ♖b4 f5 21 ♘xc4 ♙h6 22 ♘e3 ♜xc1 23 ♜xc1 fxe4 24 ♙g4 ♙h8 25 ♙e6 ♖h4 26 g3 ♖d8 27 ♜e1 ♜f3 28 ♙g4 ♜f8 29 ♙e6 ♜f3 30 ♙g4 ♜f8 ½-½

The d6-square was a very good post for the knight in this game, but it could have been viewed as a little passive as well. Take a look at the following example.

Wells-Aagaard
Copenhagen 1996
Queen's Indian Defence

1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 e6 3 c4 b6 4 a3 ♙b7 5 ♘c3 d5 6 ♙g5 dxc4 7 e4 ♙e7 8 ♖c2 ♘c6 9 ♜d1 ♖a5 10 ♘e5 0-0 11 ♘xc4 ♘xc4 12 ♙xc4 c5 13 d5 exd5 14 exd5



This was, at the time, a critical line in the Queen's Indian. Later White found more aggressive ways to play the position, although I have a feeling that there is general equilibrium.

In this position Black could play along the lines of the previous example with 14...♘e8?!, which I believed was the right move in the post-mortem

analysis, but after 15 ♙e3 ♘d6 16 ♙d3 h6 17 0-0 I did not like Black's position. The problem is that none of the pieces is sufficiently active. The knight might look pretty on d6 but, compared with the previous example, influence over e4 and f5 has little importance, while the absence of pawns on a6 and e5 makes it easier for White to remove the knight from d6 (and thereby improve the value of the passed pawn - or at least tie more black pieces down to the blockade of the pawn). All in all not a promising position. But what else?

14...♘g4 is a suggestion of Fritz, but after 15 ♙xe7 ♖xe7+ 16 ♙e2 (16 ♖e2 ♖h4 and White has problems completing development) 16...♖e5 White has 17 ♖e4! with an endgame advantage due to the strong passed pawn. Perhaps 16...♖h4! is better, but I still prefer White.

I believe the right move must be 14...♘h5!, e.g. 15 ♙e3 ♙d6 16 ♘e4 (16 0-0? ♖h4 demonstrates the main problem of having unprotected pieces - they tend to fall off the board...) 16...♘f6 17 ♘xf6+ (17 ♘d6 ♖xd6 18 0-0 ♘xd5 offers White no compensation) 17...♖xf6 18 0-0 ♜ad8 19 ♜fe1 ♙e5 and Black seems very close to being equal. Alternatively after 15 ♙xe7 ♖xe7 16 ♖e2 ♖h4 White has continued problems with development, and in the event of 16 ♘e2 ♜ad8 Black can always return the knight to quite an attractive square on f6, from where it puts pressure on the d-pawn.

The solution to the problem is that the knight is best placed on f6, and in some situations on f4. In the game I played anti-positionally.

14...♙d6? 15 ♙e2!

A true grandmaster move from my grandmaster opponent. Now the pin and the strong d-pawn become the most important aspects of the position. And, importantly, the bishop finds a better square than c4.

15 0-0? ♙xh2+!, winning a pawn for Black, was my simplistic threat.

15...♙e5 16 0-0 a6 17 ♘e4 ♙c8 18 d6 ♜a7 19 ♘xc5 ♙xb2 20 ♘e4 ♜e8 21 ♖xb2 ♜xe4 22 ♙e3 ♘d7 23 ♙f3 ♜e5 24 ♙d4 ♖b5 25 ♖e2 ♘c5 26 ♙c6 ♜a5 27 ♜fe1 ♘e6 28 ♖e3 ♖xd6 29 ♙xb6 ♖xc6 30 ♜d8+ ♘f8 31 ♖e8 ♖xe8 32 ♜exe8 h6

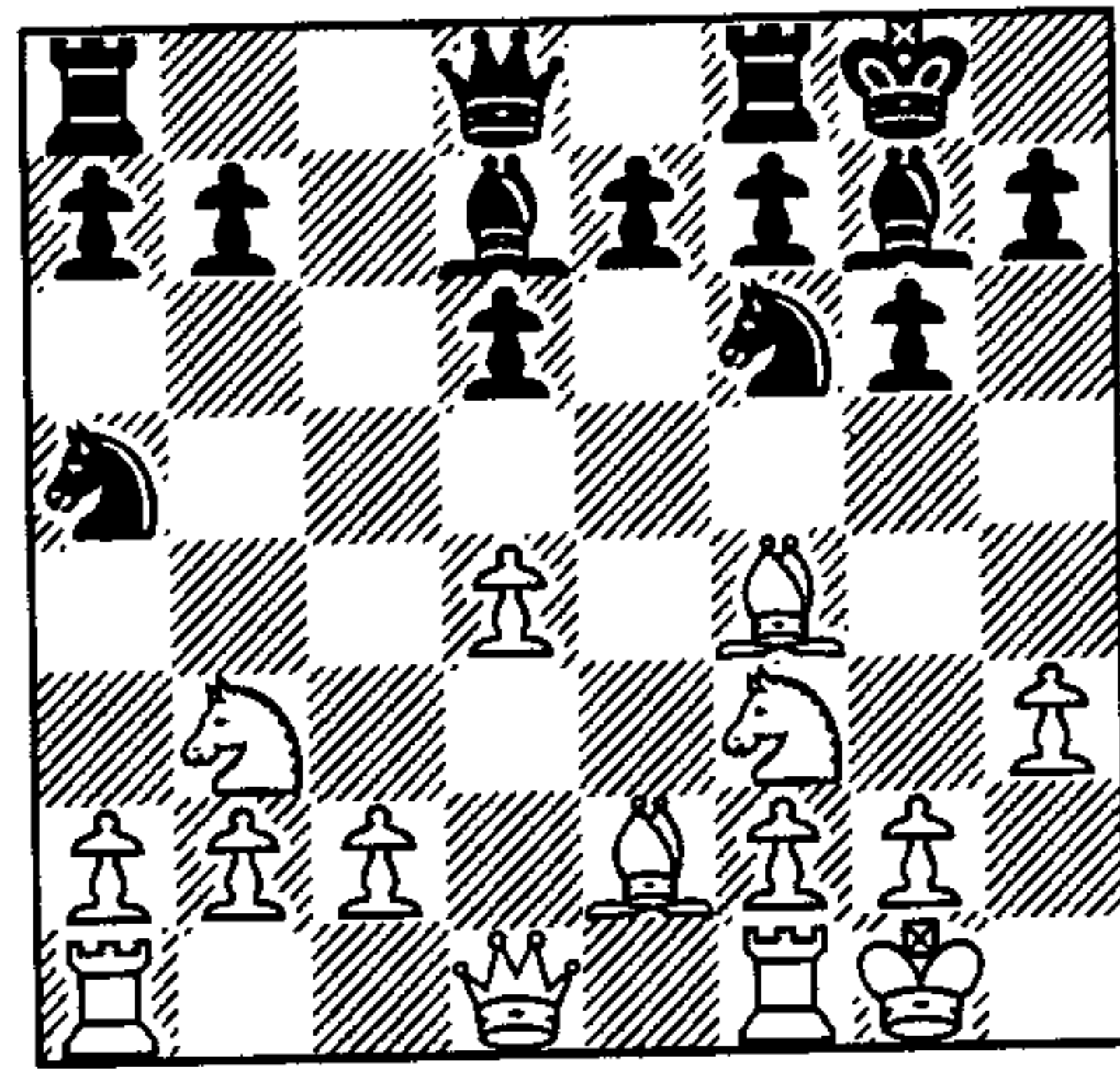
Here something funny happened. My opponent had only ten seconds remaining with which to reach move 40 and, trying to make his move, he dropped his rook into my lap. When I tried to hand it back to him, he was already standing next to me, ready to search for the piece. After the game he explained that the fair play I had displayed was uncommon in Open tournaments on the European circuit.

33 ♜xf8+ ♙h7 34 ♙xa5 1-0

Finally, thinking about knights, here is a little exercise on the theme. What should Black play after the following moves?

Fägerström-Aagaard
Sweden 2002
London System

1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 g6 3 ♙f4 ♙g7 4 e3 d6 5 ♙c4 ♘c6 6 0-0 0-0 7 h3 ♙d7 8 ♘bd2 ♖a5 9 ♙e2 c5 10 ♘b3 cxd4 11 exd4

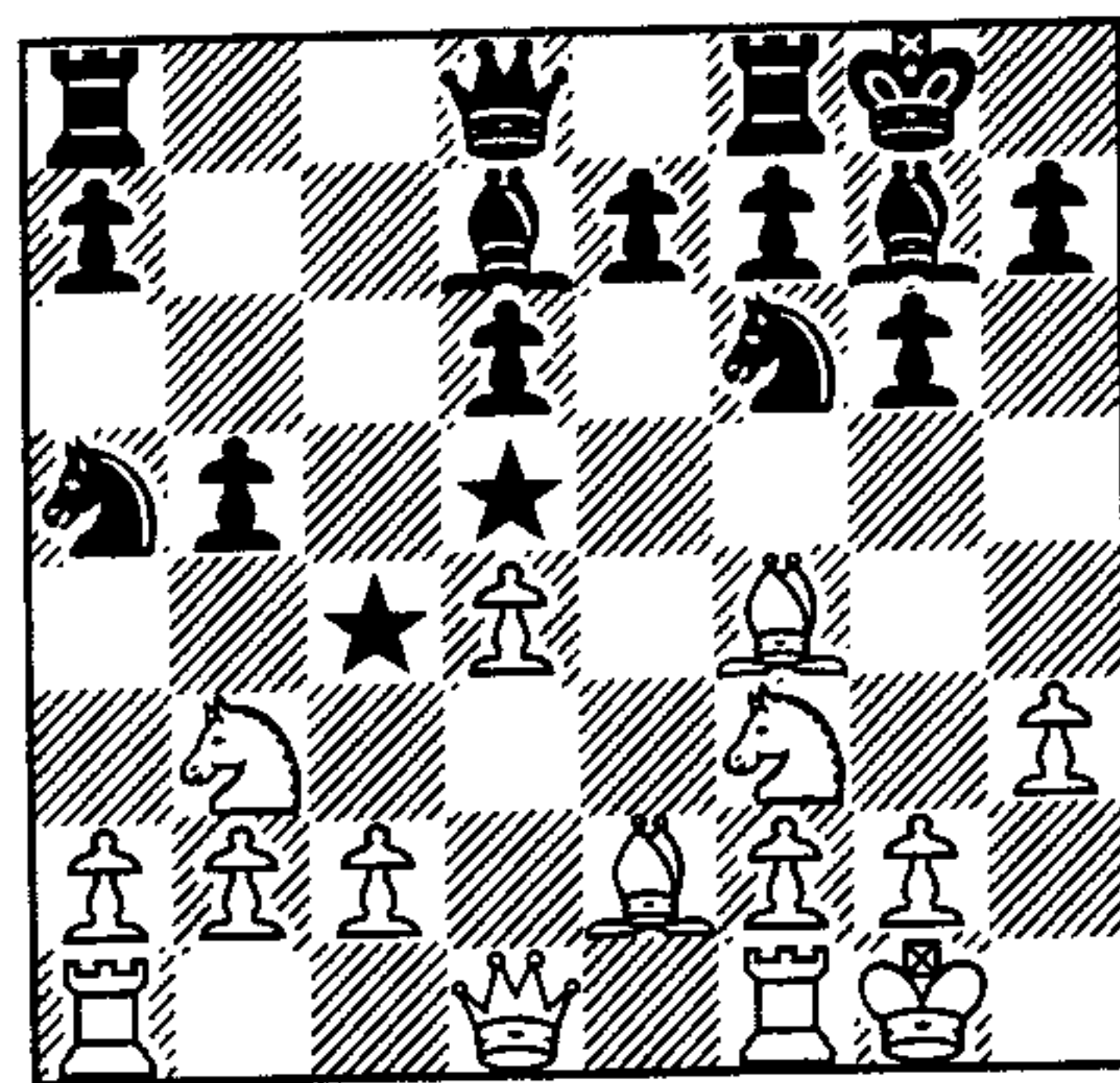


Black to move

The solution is, of course, to take the light squares in the centre. The knight on f6 could be better placed because on f6 it hampers the bishop's control over the centre, while not having enough influence of its own. The best square is obviously d5.

Black's other knight would love to come to c4, of course. Therefore some of my juniors chose 11...♖c8, which is quite a logical move. But after 12 ♘xa5 ♗xa5 13 c4 the position seems to be a little better for White. The right move must be:

11...b5!



Black has a pleasant position and will

be able to use the d5-square for both the knight and the bishop (as happened in the game). A funny note is that after 12 ♗d2 ♘c4 13 ♙xc4 bxc4 14 ♘a5 Black can exploit the d5-square to the maximum with 14...c3!, winning immediately.

One of my juniors suggested 11...♘d5 12 ♙h2 b5 with the reasoning that on 11...b5 White has the possibility of 12 d5!?. I agree that it is possible, but the opening of the long diagonal for the g7-bishop makes up for the loss of the d5-square. And the pawn on d5 also seems to be a little weak. Again – pluses and minuses. I prefer 11...b5 as White needs to take care of the unprotected bishop on f4 and possibly lose a tempo. Alexander liked 11...♘d5 first. Positional chess is about evaluating pros and cons – we don't always come to the same conclusions and we don't always agree that one is right and another wrong.

The game continued 12 ♘xa5 ♗xa5 13 ♖e1 with a complex struggle ahead.

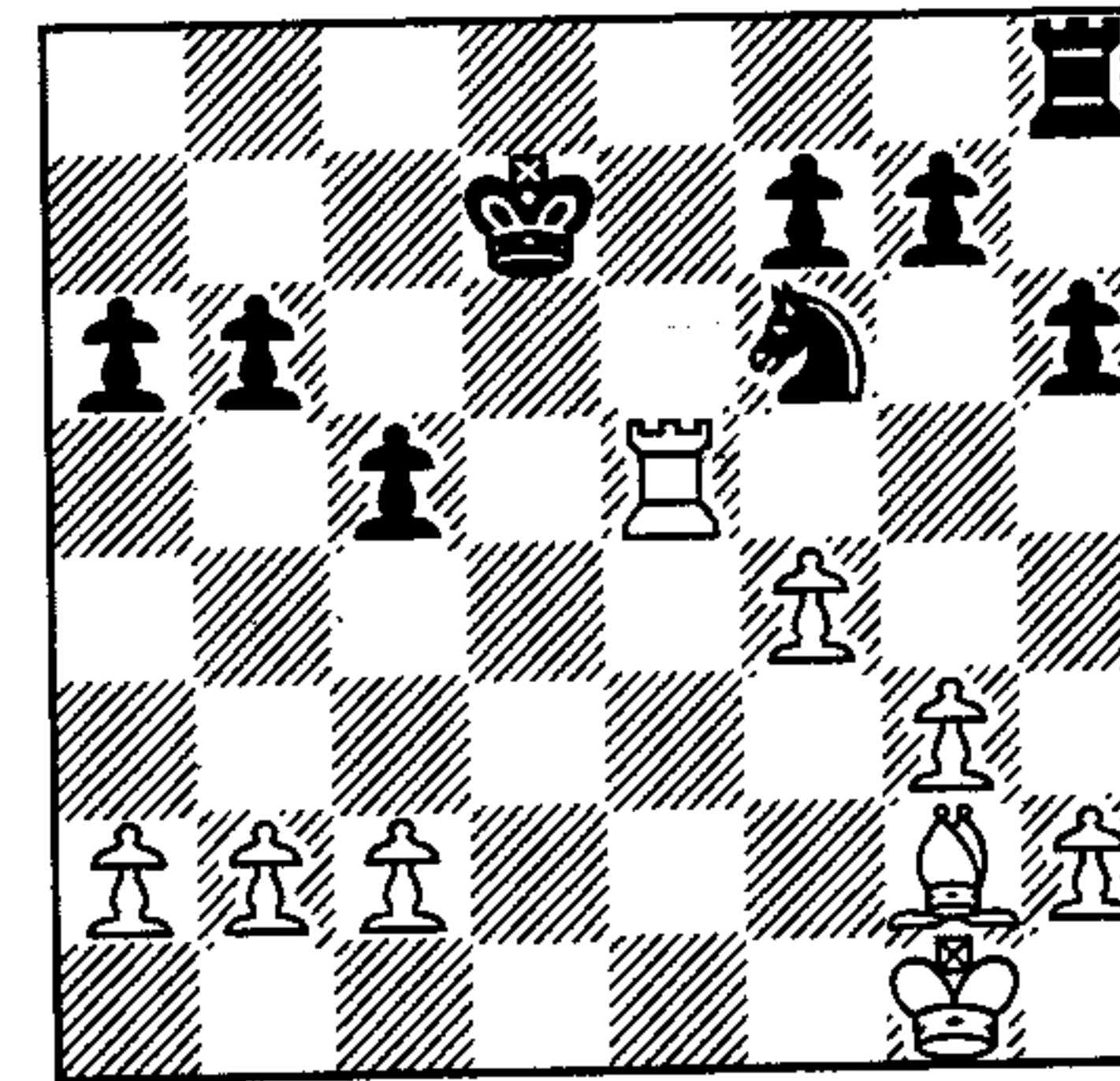
Bishops – The Archers of Chess

While knights have to get close to their victims in order to hit them with a deadly blow, bishops have true long-range power. And because they go diagonally across the board they can be compared to archers in a medieval battle, shooting down their enemies while simultaneously staying out of harm's way. Bishops are known as inferior to knights if their are pawns on only one flank, or if the position is closed. This is because their long-range abilities are then worthless. However, in open positions with pawns on both flanks, bish-

ops are generally superior to knights due to their ability to quickly shift their attention from one side of the board to the other, and even sometimes influence both sides simultaneously.

In the following position the white bishop is very strong.

Fischer-Taimanov
Vancouver 1971



Taimanov wrote about this endgame: 'In what followed I felt like Dr. Watson who could only play along and watch the resourcefulness and imagination of the great Sherlock Holmes.'

25 ♙f1!

Forcing Black to play ...a6-a5. Of course White would like Black to put his queenside pawns on light squares so the bishop would be able to attack them.

25...a5 26 ♙c4 ♖f8 27 ♗g2 ♗d6 28 ♗f3 ♘d7 29 ♖e3 ♘b8 30 ♖d3+ ♗c7 31 c3 ♘c6 32 ♖e3 ♗d6

If Black tries to do something about his pawns with 32...a4 he will just have an additional weakness on a4 after 33 a3! etc.

33 a4!

The bishop really likes the outpost on

c4 and with the text Fischer makes certain that the knight cannot threaten the bishop. The pawn might be on a light square but the most important factor is that the rest of the pawns are on dark squares.

33...♘e7 34 h3 ♘c6 35 h4 h5

It was very uncomfortable to let White play h4-h5 and g3-g4-g5, but now White forces Black to put the kingside pawns on light squares. I believe that in both cases Black would have lost the game.

36 ♖d3+ ♗c7 37 ♖d5! f5

37...♖h8 38 ♖g5 and White wins. Black has no way to avoid weakening his position.

38 ♖d2 ♖f6 39 ♖e2 ♗d7 40 ♖e3 g6

Sooner or later this would have to be played.

41 ♙b5 ♖d6 42 ♗e2 ♗d8?

This is considered to be the losing mistake but I doubt that Black would have been able to withstand the pressure forever. Even theoretically.

43 ♖d3!

Fischer executes the winning plan. The bishop dominates the knight.

43...♗c7 44 ♖xd6 ♗xd6 45 ♗d3 ♘e7 46 ♙e8 ♗d5 47 ♙f7+

The bishop has the ability to lose a move, something the knight cannot do. Here White uses this to penetrate with his king.

47...♗d6 48 ♗c4 ♗c6 49 ♙e8+ ♗b7 50 ♗b5 ♘c8 51 ♙c6+ ♗c7 52 ♙d5 ♘e7 53 ♙f7 ♗b7 54 ♙b3

Fischer knows the old Russian trick of showing who is the master by repeating the position a few times.

54...♗a7 55 ♙d1 ♗b7 56 ♙f3+ ♗c7 57 ♗a6 ♘c8 58 ♙d5 ♘e7 59

♙c4 ♘c6 60 ♙f7 ♘e7 61 ♙e8

Black is in zugzwang. Now he has to win a piece. Unfortunately for him, it loses the game.

61...♙d8 62 ♙xg6 ♘xg6 63 ♙xb6 ♙d7 64 ♙xc5 ♘e7

This is another situation where a bishop would have been more useful as the knight can block a few pawns but does so in a very inflexible fashion.

65 b4 axb4 66 cxb4 ♘c8 67 a5 ♘d6 68 b5 ♘e4+ 69 ♙b6 ♙c8 70 ♙c6 ♙b8 71 b6 1-0

When I refer to knights as cavalry, bishops as archers, rooks as cannons and queens as wizards it is for a reason. By understanding the pieces in this respect I find it easier to do them justice. For children in particular these images are useful.

Heavy Pieces:

Big Powers – Big Responsibilities

Knights and bishops are normally the most important pieces in the middle-game. The reason is simple: rooks and queens are more susceptible to incoming fire than minor pieces. Of course there are such things as rook sacrifices, exchange sacrifices, queen sacrifices and so on. But there are also blunders and trapped pieces (pins, forks and other disasters). Heavy pieces are chivalrous yet fragile species.

The fewer pieces there are on the board the more squares will become available for the heavy pieces and, consequently, their strength increases for every exchange.

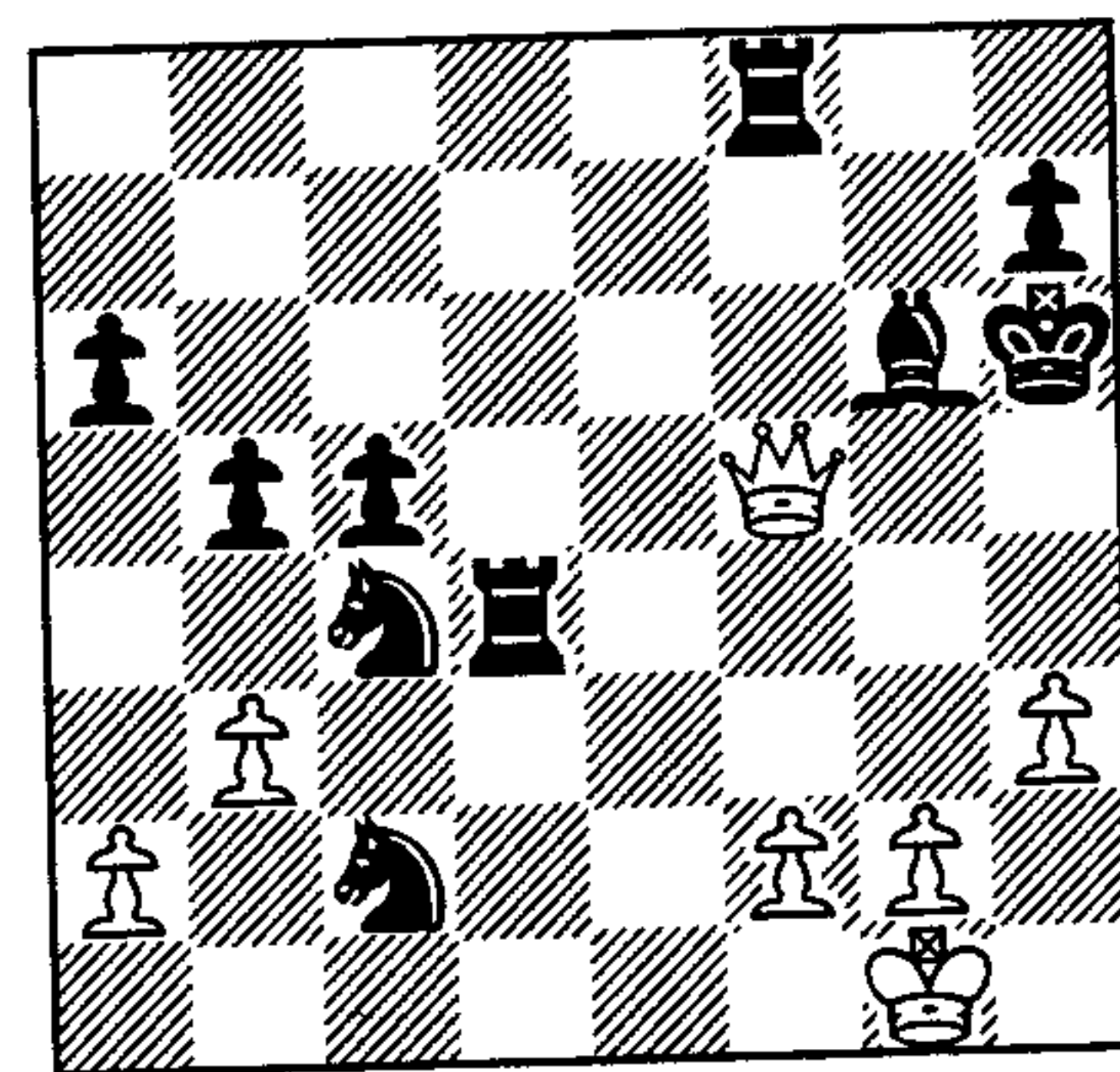
This is the theory, at least. With plenty of pieces on the board, knights and bishops are capable of hassling the

rooks and queens in a way that makes them seek shelter behind pawns and/or other lesser beings. Often the heavy pieces stand with their backs against the wall and show a little muscle while they let the young and restless fight the battle for the centre. When did you last see a combination where only the major pieces remained on the board? Tactical properties belong to some extent to the minor pieces, while the major pieces come to life only when plenty of blood has already been spilt on the board.

However, there is one situation where heavy pieces come into their being in the middlegame. This is when you have a rook against two pieces, or a queen against three pieces, *and the minor pieces are poorly co-ordinated.*

Tal in particular was great at using the heavy pieces against minor pieces. The following position is probably the most extreme case of positional compensation with a heavy piece.

Tal-Panno
Portoroz 1958



White is about to regain some material, but hardly enough. And on top of all that, Black effectively has a passed

pawn on the c-file. But there are other factors which are significant. Black's king is in trouble, the a6-pawn is about to fall and White will have a passed pawn, too. However, without his supreme understanding of the capacities of the heavy pieces Tal would not have gone for this endgame, and the world would have been robbed of a masterpiece. White managed to win after:

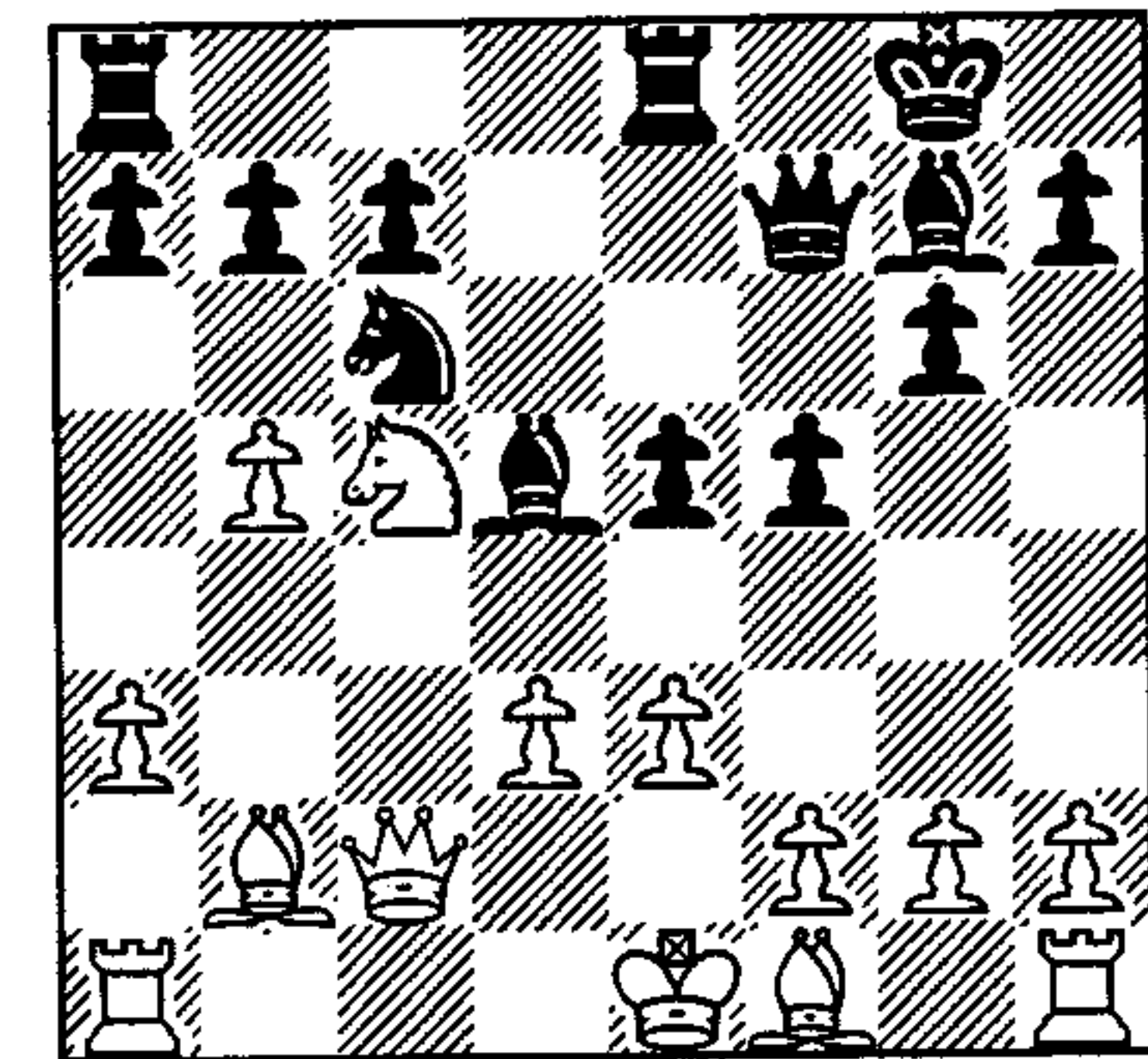
30 ♙xf8+ ♙g5 31 bxc4 bxc4 32 g3 ♙e4 33 h4+ ♙g4 34 ♙h2 ♙f5 35 ♙f6 h6 36 ♙e5 ♙e4 37 ♙g7+ ♙f3 38 ♙c3+ ♘e3 39 ♙g1 ♙g4 40 fxe3 h5 41 ♙e1 ♙xe3?

Tal writes the following in what Murray Chandler and others have called the best chess book ever: 'Fatigued by the foregoing struggle, Panno makes a mistake. 41...♙e6 would have drawn quickly since 42 e4 gets nowhere after 42...c3. Now White has real winning chances.' The book is, of course, *The Life and Games of Mikhail Tal*. Personally I prefer the endgame university by Mark Dvoretsky, but this is a very recent work (to be published in English at approximately the same time as this book). 42 ♙f1+ ♙e4 43 ♙xc4+ ♙f3 44 ♙f1+ ♙e4 45 ♙xa6 ♙d4 46 ♙d6+ ♙c4 47 a4 ♙e1+ 48 ♙f2 ♙e2+ 49 ♙f1 ♙a2 50 ♙a6+ ♙d4 51 a5 c4 52 ♙b6+ ♙d5 53 a6 ♙a1+ 54 ♙f2 c3 55 a7 c2 56 ♙b3+ ♙d6 57 ♙d3+ 1-0

The following example of a rook dominating two minor pieces could have been played by Tal himself, but was played by the greatest player of our time instead. The question is – would he have been able to play in this fashion

had he not known the games of Tal? We will never know, but it is clear that it was easier for Kasparov to know about this material imbalance after studying the games of Tal.

Van Wely-Kasparov
Tilburg 1997



White has played a Sicilian reversed and has made the mistake of not developing his pieces properly. Of course Black has not made it easy for him either, and now Kasparov takes over the initiative with a classical piece sacrifice that is not so difficult to calculate.

15...♘d4! 16 exd4

16 ♙c1 b6 does not improve White's situation so the sacrifice has to be accepted.

16...exd4+ 17 ♙e2

17 ♙d1? loses to 17...b6 and 17 ♙d2 b6 makes little difference as ...♙h6+ is coming.

17...♙xg2 18 0-0-0

Thanks to ...♙f3 there were no alternatives.

18...♙xh1 19 ♙xh1

This position was easy to foresee but to evaluate it is something else. With the next sequence of moves Kasparov en-

sures that his slightly better co-ordination is maintained and that the lead in development is kept all the way into the endgame.

19...♖d5! 20 ♖e1

20 ♖g1? ♖xe2! etc.

20...♖e5!

The queen's rook is the worst placed piece, and soon it will be participating in the game. White continues to retreat, being poorly co-ordinated.

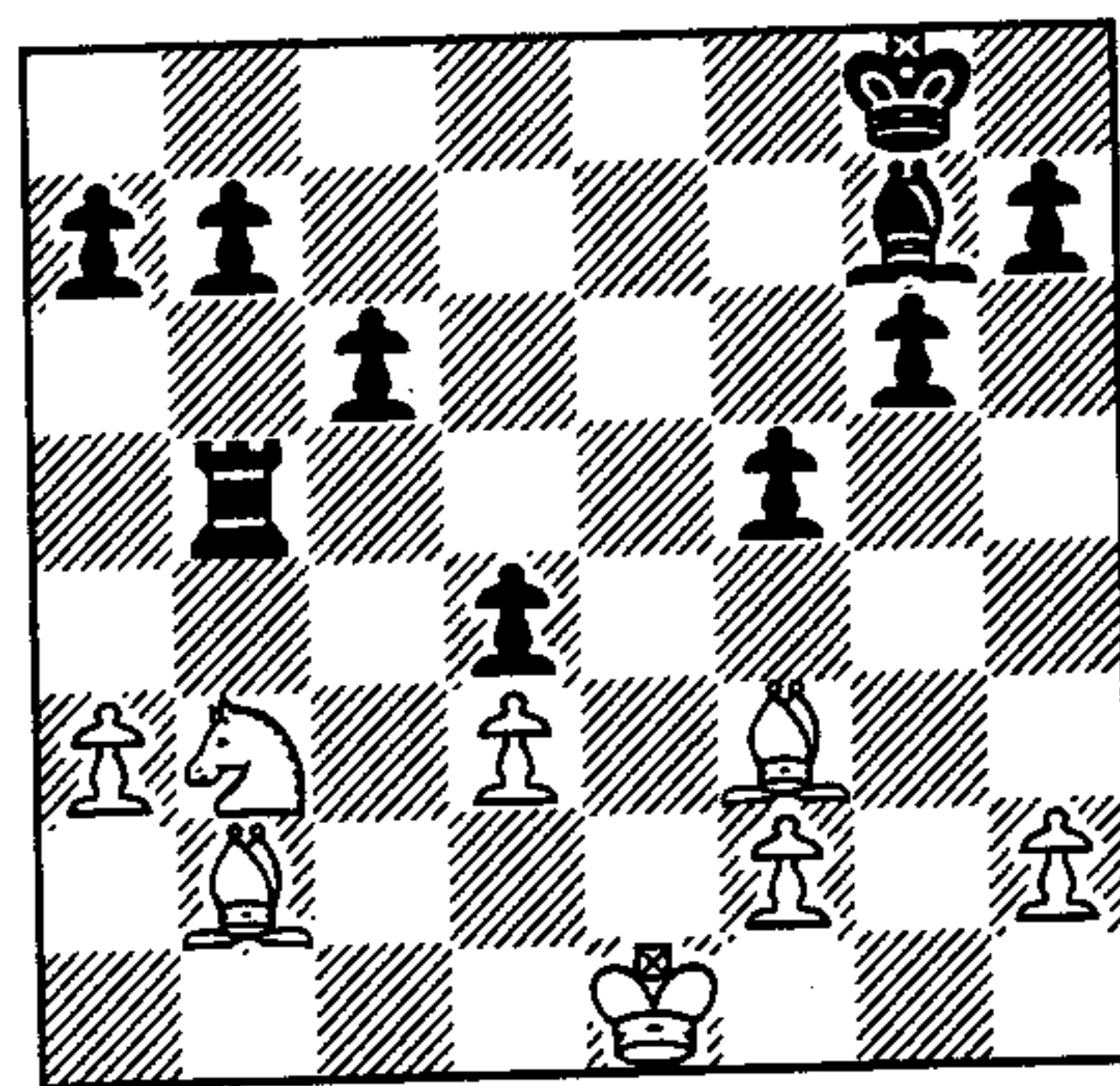
21 ♖b3

Also possible is 21 ♘b3, when after 21...♖ae8 (21...♖e7!?, as suggested by Winants, is perhaps a safer path to an advantage) 22 ♖xd4 ♖xe2 23 ♖xe2 ♖xe2 24 ♖xe2 ♖xb3 25 ♖xg7 ♖xg7 Black has a much better ending in view of the extra pawn and White's weaknesses. However, White has some drawing chances after 26 ♖e7+ ♖f7 27 ♖d8!, when at least Black cannot dominate.

21...♖xb3 22 ♘b3 ♖ae8! 23 ♖d1

23 ♘xd4 ♖5e7 24 ♖d2 ♖d7 and all the insufficiently protected white pieces can no longer be protected.

23...♖xb5 24 ♖f3 ♖xe1+ 25 ♖xe1 c6!



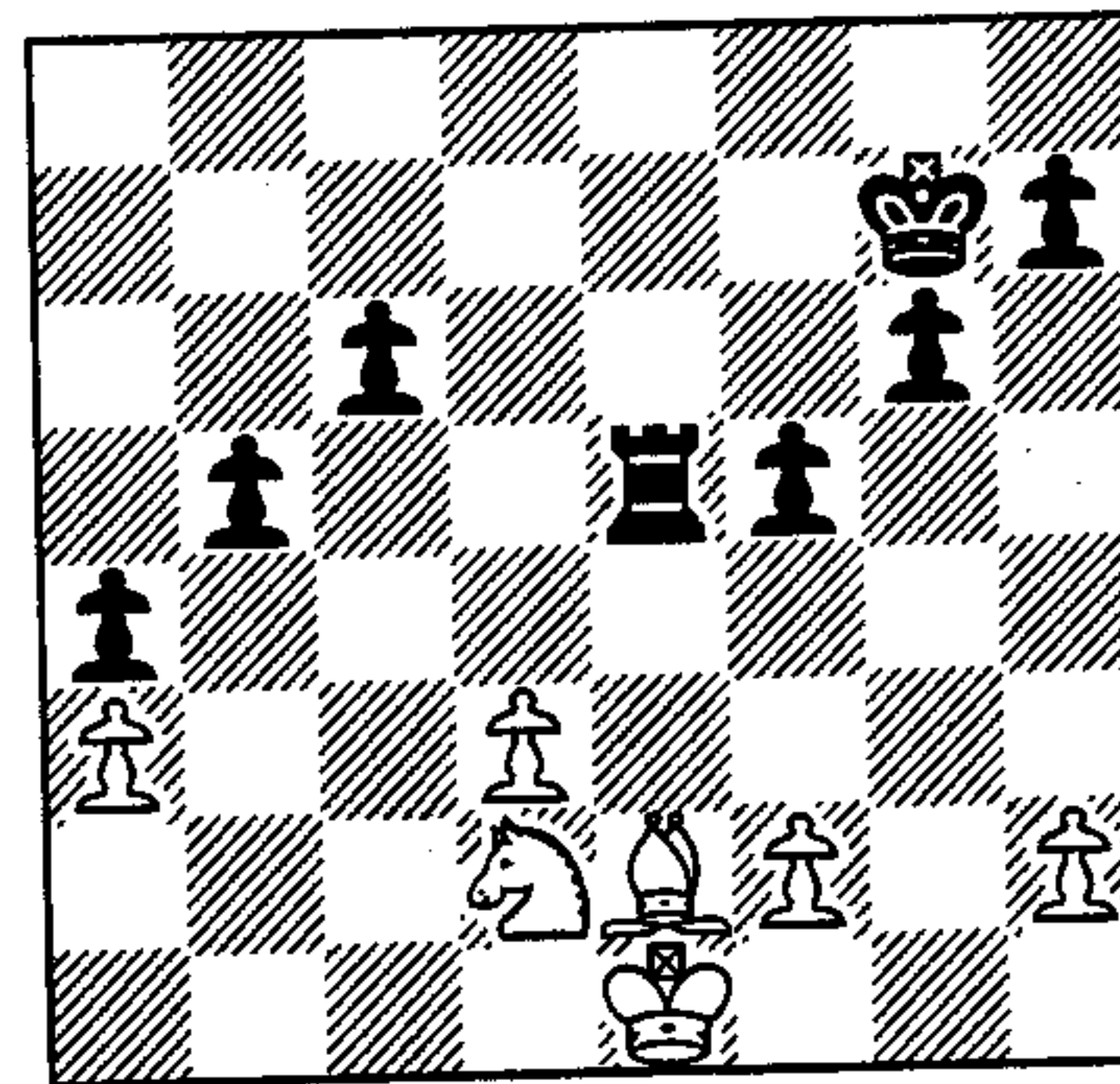
Domination. If the rook cannot

dominate the minor pieces it will eventually be outnumbered.

26 ♖d1 a5! 27 ♖xd4 a4 28 ♖xg7 ♖xg7

The exchange could seem to favour White as two versus one should be better than three versus two, but the exchange of bishops increases the number of squares to where the rook can travel safely, and also marks the pawns on a3 and h2 as weaknesses. An important point here is that minor pieces have great difficulty playing against a rook and a passed pawn on the edge of the board. It is no surprise that Kasparov uses this important feature of the material imbalance to win the game.

29 ♘d2 ♖e5+ 30 ♖e2 b5



Materially speaking the situation is roughly equal. Rook and pawn is probably not quite enough against two minor pieces, while rook and two pawns might be slightly better. Here there is no doubt. The white knight cannot find a stronghold anywhere, the bishop cannot find scope and the white pawns are divided and leaderless. The dark forces have won the battle for Middle-Earth...

31 ♖d1 ♖d5 32 ♖c2 g5 33 ♖f3

♖d6 34 h3 ♖g6 35 ♘b1 h5 36 ♘c3 g4 37 ♖g2 ♖f6

Black's king is going to the centre. The text allows White to exchange the h-pawns and free his bishop from its obligation, but with the entry point on h2 available for the rook Black is well compensated.

38 hxg4 hxg4 39 d4 ♖g5 40 ♖d3 ♖h6 41 ♖e2 f4 42 ♖e4 ♖h3!

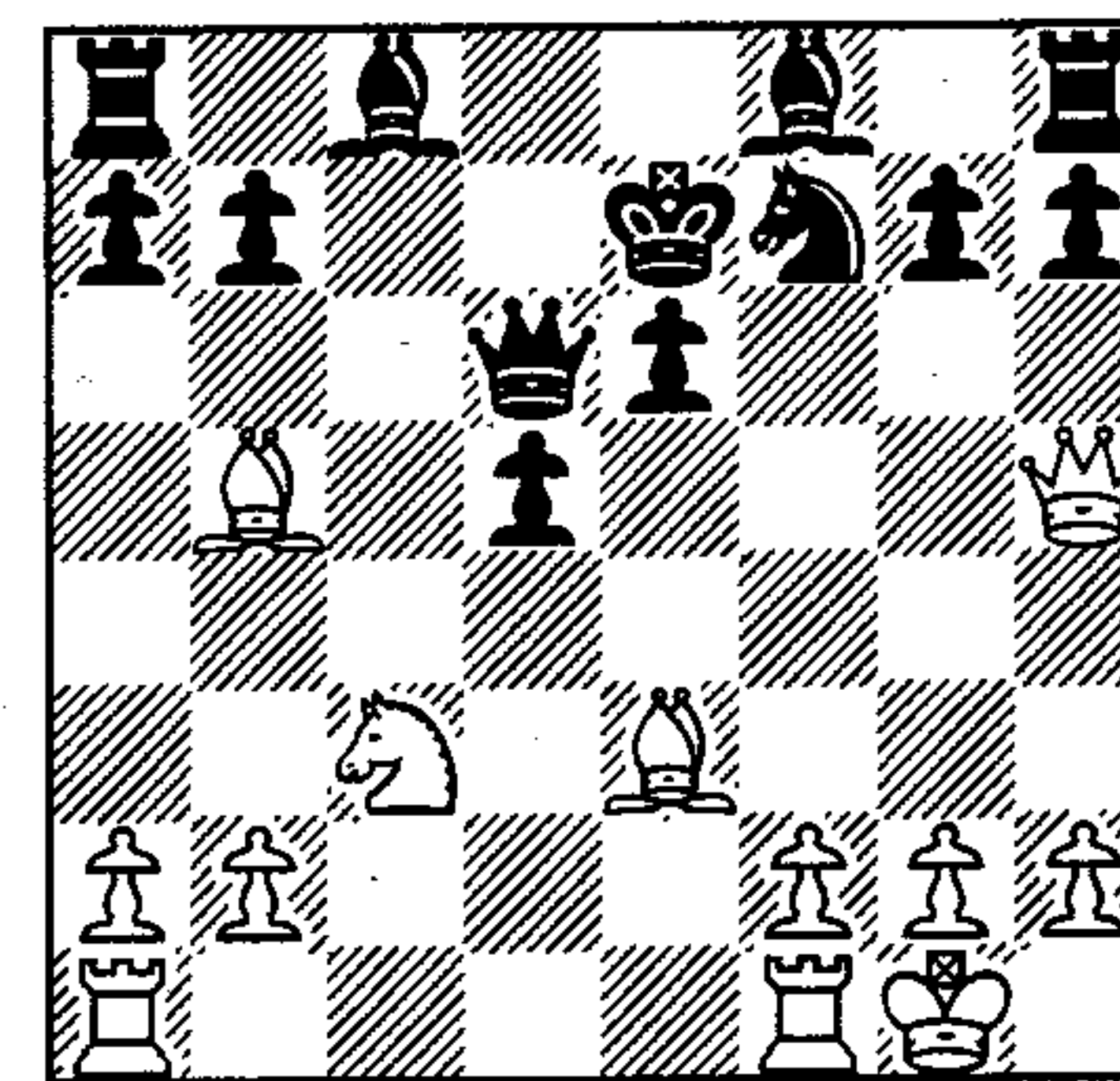
Domination once again. Black is winning on both flanks.

43 ♖d2 ♖h2 44 ♖e1 g3 45 fxg3 fxg3 46 ♖f1 ♖f2+ 47 ♖g1 b4! 48 axb4 a3 49 d5 ♖f4! 50 ♖g6 cxd5 51 ♘xd5+ ♖g5 0-1

52 ♖b1 ♖b2 53 ♘c3 ♖xb1+! 54 ♘xb1 a2 etc.

The King and the Right to Castle

To many players the loss of the right to castle is itself a reason to worry. If you find yourself in a situation such as the one below (taken from an opening trap) this is easy to understand:



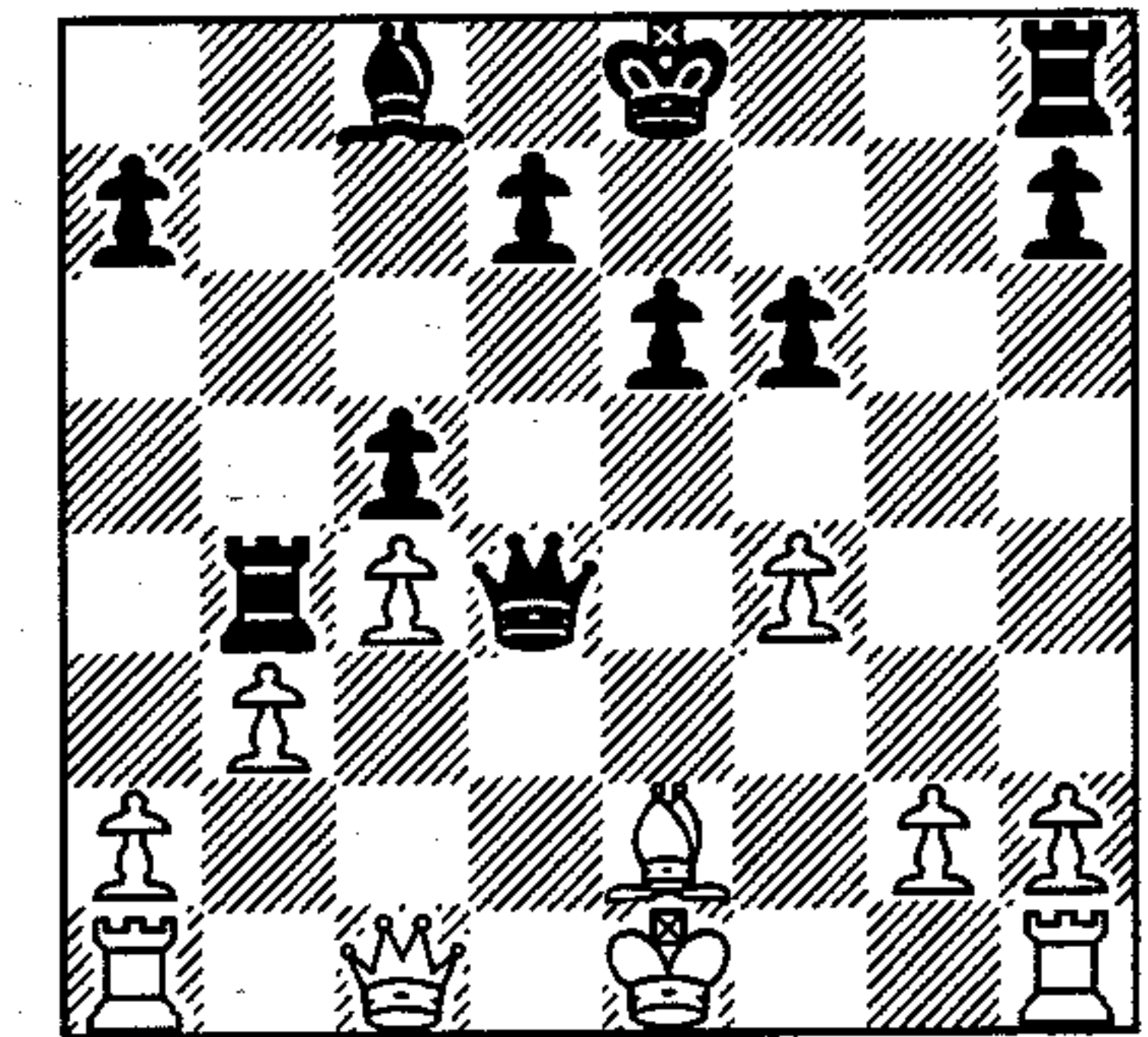
Here Black is in serious trouble, although there are currently no direct threats against the king. But they will come! The central pawns offer little help as the key factor in this kind of

position is how many pieces there are on the attacking side compared with the defending side. Black will find it very difficult bringing his pieces out of the two corners because he has to simultaneously look out for his king's safety. Even a materialistic chess program such as Fritz evaluates this as winning for White.

But compare this to the following position.

Hartvig-Raetsky

Tåstrup 2002



In this position White quickly played:

19 ♖h5+?

Taking away Black's right to castle. But before rushing to do this he should have asked himself if this was to his advantage. In fact it transpires that Black wants to put his bishop on a6 and his rook on b8, and this is achieved one move faster after the check. Compared to the previous example White's pieces are not about to storm the enemy king. And the king would probably have gone to e7 anyway as this square is safer than g8. All in all, White should have played 19 ♖f3 with a slightly inferior position. Now the game ended quickly.

19...♖e7 20 ♖f3 a5 21 ♖b1 ♖a6

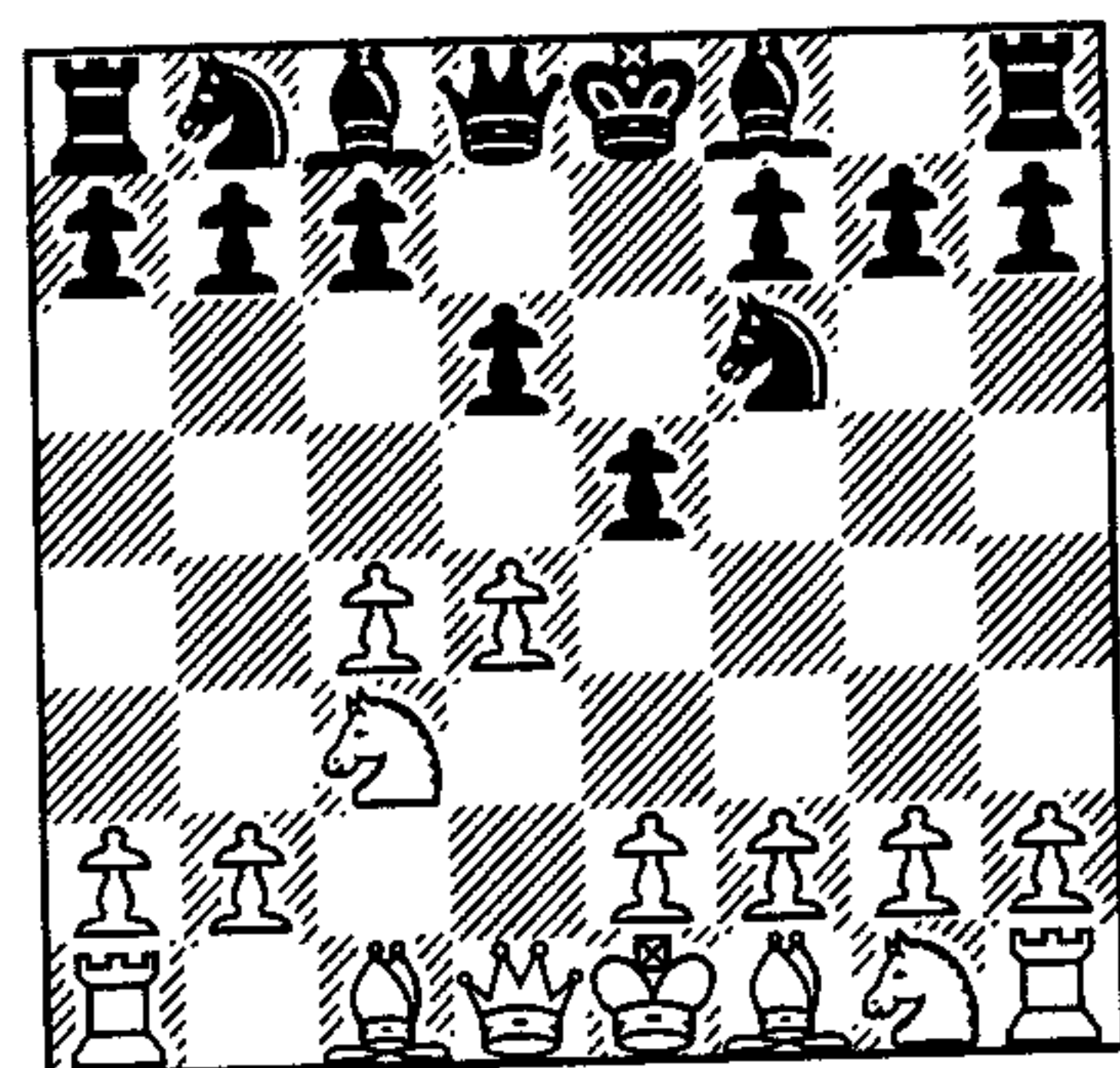
22 ♖e2 ♜hb8 23 ♛c2

After 23 ♜d1 ♜xc4 24 bxc4 ♙xc4+ 25 ♖e1 ♜xb1 Black also wins.

23...♙xc4+! 24 bxc4 ♜b2 0-1

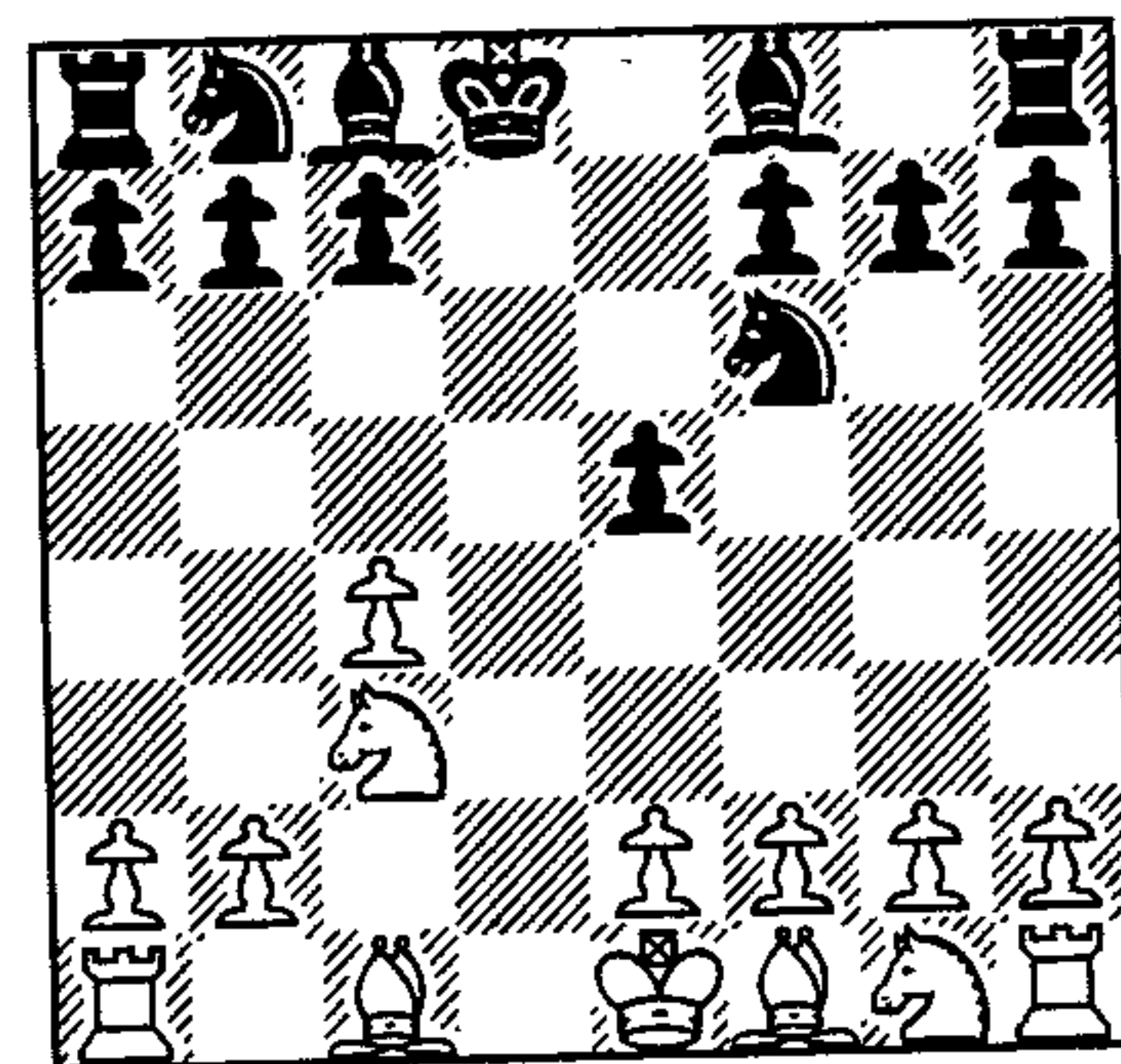
Black wins the queen. After the game he was not unhappy with the extra tempo his opponent gave him to carry out his plan.

The 'superstition' of many players regarding the right to castle is well illustrated by the following example.



In this well known position, opening theory considers 4 ♘f3 to be the best way to fight for an advantage. I know many club players who would look with

amazement upon 3...e5 (after 1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 d6 3 ♘c3), believing that Black has lost his head. But after 4 dxe5 dxe5 5 ♛xd8+ ♖xd8 Black does not have problems with the king.



Black's king stands on the d-file but after ...c7-c6 and ...♖c7 it will be perfectly safe. That does not mean that giving up the right to castle just to get into an endgame is necessarily justified. It means that when you have the right to remove your opponent's chance of castling, or he is threatening to remove yours, that you should try to find out who really benefits from this, rather than taking matters for granted.

CHAPTER FIVE

Analysing Your Own Games

It is well known – and has been for a century – that one of the key ways of improving is to analyse our own games. For this there are some obvious reasons. First we get to check our intuitive decisions against more concrete evidence. Secondly, we might get a better insight into our general thought processes. Thirdly, we will probably learn a lot about the openings we play, one way or another. But most importantly, if we analyse our games correctly, we will be able to see recurring mistakes. And that is obviously an important step in the direction of correcting them.

In this chapter I will try to offer some good advice as to how this can be conducted effectively. It is my feeling that even greats like Yusupov and Yermolinsky, when they talk about analysing your own games as a way to improve, fail to offer much advice about how to get the best out of your hard work. Perhaps it is me, but I feel that more precise guidelines could be drawn, and I have tried to do so.

Below are eight levels upon which we

can analyse our games. They have been arranged according to the amount of work involved. Thus you might want to go as far as Level 4 and no further, or until Level 6, and no more. Please note that they are not in the order in which they should be conducted. I simply want everyone, even the laziest of the lazy, to be able to benefit from these pages.

1) Write down three new things you have learned from the game

Well, how long can this take? After a while it actually becomes more difficult as you will eventually run out of new things to write. However, I am sure that seeing each game also as a stepping-stone to new knowledge will benefit your overall performance. (I thank Coach for this idea.)

2) Always write down the time spent during the game

This is a well known idea and should be followed strictly. Quite simply, when you write down the moves you also

write your time, or the time of your opponent. I have found in my work with pupils that this will always reveal where mistakes are quite commonly placed during the course of a game. With one pupil, for example, his obvious mistakes tended to be a result of playing a move instantly, or pondering over it for 30-40 minutes without seeing anything at all. After realising this he started using his time better and went up 100 Elo points – from 2200 to 2300 – very quickly. From then on real improvements were unfortunately needed in his chess, but they came, and now he is regularly playing for IM-norms and pushing his rating in the direction of 2400.

I am certain that if you start writing down the time after each move you will notice something you did not know, or perhaps you will notice something you did know, but had done nothing about.

3) Check the opening theory

This is easy. If you have a database on your computer you check some critical positions and some strong GM games that are played along the same lines as your game. The same goes for using books, of course – just look at what others have played. I know a guy who lost the same game twice in two years – all the moves were identical! For obvious reasons I will keep his name to myself. Here is a recent game of my own in which I survived a terrible mistake that no one else has ever survived at such a high level. I learned a lot from looking through the games on my computer database and in my Dragon book – mainly that I did not understand the system and should play something else!

Smolkov–Aagaard

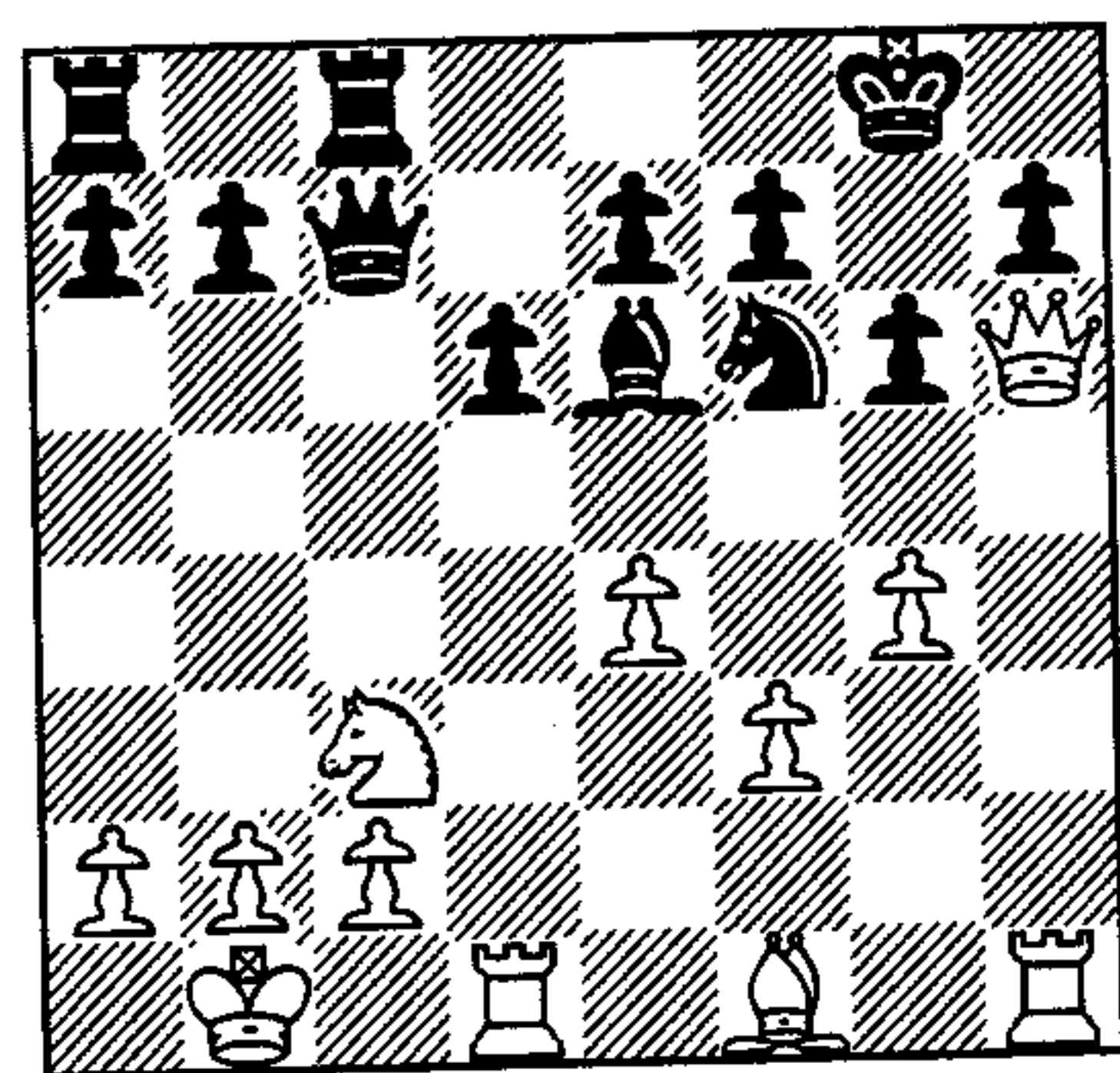
Voronezh 2002

Sicilian Defence

1 e4 c5 2 d4 f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 dxd4 d6 5 d3 g6 6 e3 g7 7 f3 0-0 8 d2 c6 9 0-0-0 dxd4 10 exd4 e6 11 b1 c7 12 h4 f8 13 h5 xh5??

Please do not try this at home – or anywhere else. As far as I can see from my database I am really the only survivor of this mistake. White's continuation is pretty straightforward, but I still failed to see it. In my defence I would say that a very beautiful Russian blonde was watching me as I was thinking...

Oh, how easy it is to lose concentration!
14 xg7 xg7 15 g4 d6 16 h6+ g8



How to win? Take a minute and see it to the end.

17 e5! dx5 18 g5 dh5 19 xh5 gxh5 20 d3 e4 21 xe4?

21 dx4! has been played in some games (all games), after which I had intended 21... f4, knowing that it lost, even though I had not seen the following straightforward combination – 22 d6+ exf6 23 xh7+ h8 24 f5+!

g8 25 h7+ f8 26 h8+ e7 27 gxf6 mate.

21... e5!

At least covering some squares and thereby staying alive (just). For some reason I always seem to play wonderfully in 'decided' positions.

22 xh7+ h8 23 e4+ g8 24 xb7?

A grave mistake caused by miscalculation. 24 h7+ f8 25 xb7 would still give White a virtually winning position.

24... d8!

Now White no longer has an advantage.

25 xa8 xd1+ 26 xd1 d4!

A nice little trick.

27 b3

27 d3 g1+.

27... xd1+ 28 b2 d4+ 29 b1 d1+ ½-½

Incidentally, games such as this – whether they are lost, won or drawn – can be a good motivation for getting started on some interesting studying. And almost always you will find something new that you did not consider either during the game or the post-mortem. Here the 22 d6+ reply to 21... f4 (see note to White's 21st) even went undiscovered when I went through the game with my opponent. We analysed only 22 g1 and decided that it won for White.

4) Write down the critical moments of the game, the things you saw during the game and what you think went wrong. Do this the same evening.

Mark Dvoretsky writes the following

in his *School of Chess Excellence 2 – Tactical Play*: 'A chess player depends on his own discoveries to no less degree than those of others. They are closer to him, and they are better remembered, since at some point they have already been deeply considered and sensed by him. Your own games should be carefully preserved, and sometimes again examined.'

Mark is right here, as he tends to be. The thing is that we learn much less from being given conclusions than we do from finding them ourselves. This is why it is so valuable to analyse your own games. The idea of always writing down on the same day the moments in games that you felt were critical is probably rather obvious, but I will take a few seconds of your time to explain it anyway. Later, when you get around to analysing your game thoroughly (in my case I have recently started analysing a game played eight years ago!) you will find this record of your emotions during the game highly beneficial. It will also suit you as a motivational tool. When you write down your feelings and unanswered questions from a tense game they will hang around in your memory until you address them.

5) Analyse the game yourself. Only when finished should you refer to Fritz

These days most people analyse their games by turning on *Fritz* in their hotel room/flat/house, and relax with a refreshing drink. This is what we call analysing our games! It is no wonder that modern chess is increasingly oriented to openings, and playing styles are becoming more tactical. The importance of deeper positional understanding is fading

into the background because everything seems to be evaluated in terms of mate or material rather than squares and plans and so on. This is mainly valid for amateurs and not for the very top players, who clearly understand chess very well in all its facets.

Computers can be a useful tool to us when we work on one of our biggest weaknesses, such as complex tactics, but cannot help with strengths such as logic, structures, long-term planning, intuition etc. So when it comes to analysing our games in detail (something that is difficult to find the time to do during tournaments) we should start by devoting considerable time to it. What we are doing is not only searching for the truth, to find some justification for our sour or happy feelings about a game and its result, but also investigating how we think and how our ability to make correct decisions at the board is affected. Additionally, of course, we develop our ability to think further just by thinking. This is where we do not want to use *Fritz* or similar programs as they should not think for us at home. Lance Armstrong does not prepare for the *Tour de France* in his car, and nor should we prepare ourselves for tournaments by letting the computer think for us.

When you do analyse your games try to devote plenty of time to questioning your decisions. I have a saying that you should believe in yourself and believe yourself. The first part concerns not setting limits for our abilities, while the second part means we should be aware of our inner voice. I have personally experienced, again and again, that I have a feeling in some positions or situations and I

choose not to follow it – and always regret it. Our intuition is a powerful tool and when we feel something we should be alert to this priceless information, especially when we play or analyse. If we have any sort of uncomfortable feeling about a conclusion then it is time to go deeper into that position. A common reason for ‘ignoring’ your intuition is believing in others before yourself. I have often had bad feelings in the opening, playing some line simply because it has been evaluated as equal in a book or magazine. But this was always wrong. Later analysis showed me time and time again that there is no better guide in life than your own, well-founded intuition.

It is also important to append a question mark to all conclusions you feel sure about, as this is often where you can improve on your deeper understanding of things. For although your intuition is a strong and magical tool, it is not flawless – which is probably the first thing your intuition has told you about the lines above!

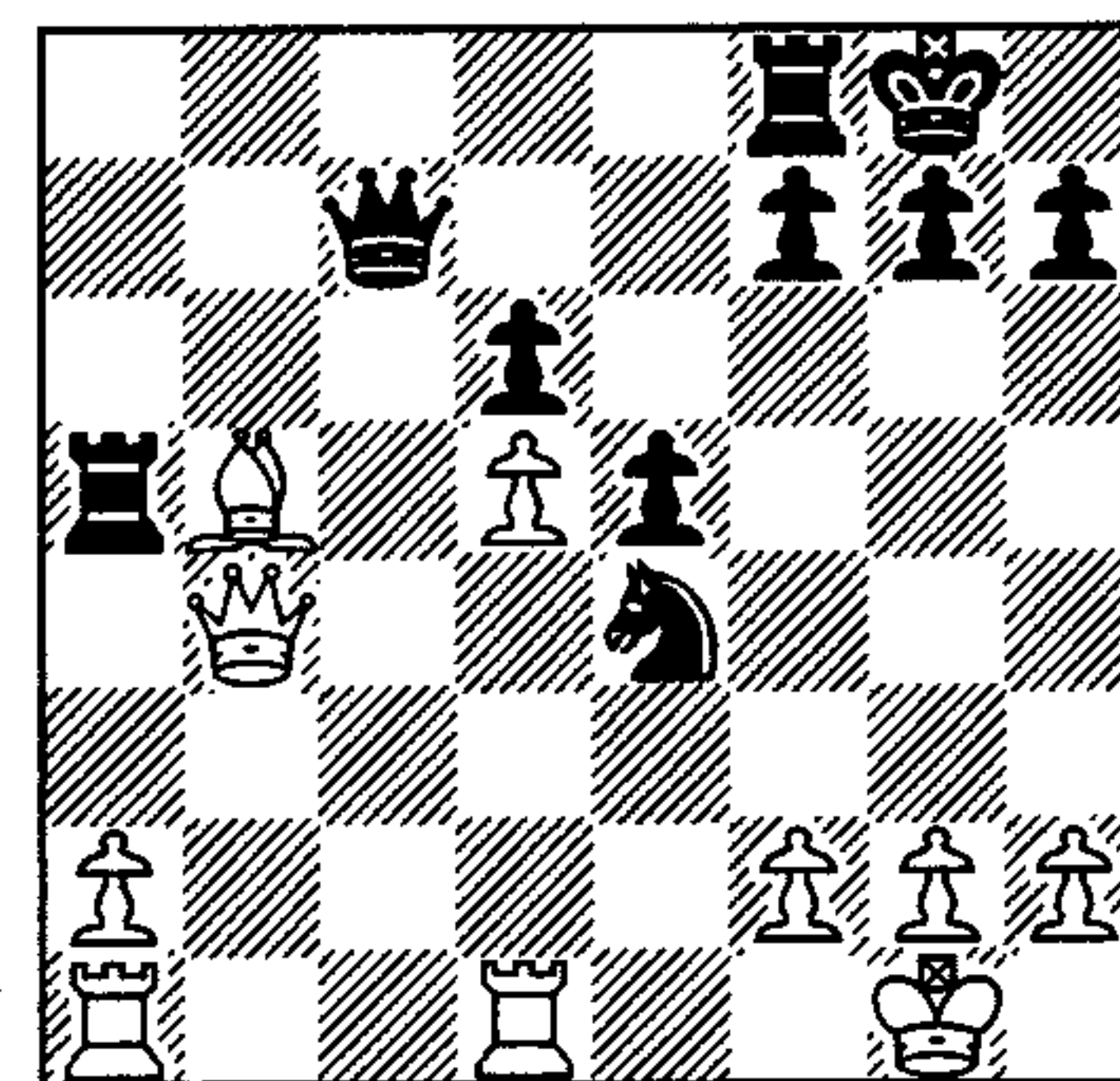
It is generally considered a good idea to express your conclusions in words as well as in variations when you have analysed your games and come to conclusions. For this reason I often like to analyse my games with others (it is not a good idea to talk to myself!). I believe in both ways of thinking – abstract, long-term concept oriented thinking and concrete, provable thinking. A move should fall into both camps in order to really impress.

When you have finished analysing your games and feel there is little further progress to be made alone, it is time to go through your games with a computer.

The computer will then find the tactics *you were unable to find yourself*. This will provide you one of two deeply rewarding experiences – either you will be supported in your own analysis by someone who sees everything, or you will see now doors of wisdom open in front of your eyes, doors that were previously closed to you. The thing is that to be able to understand what these doors really hide you first need to have done all the work yourself. You cannot truly realise what is new for you if you do not test the limits of what you know.

Here are some examples from my games in the summer of 2002, when my trainer and I found great improvements.

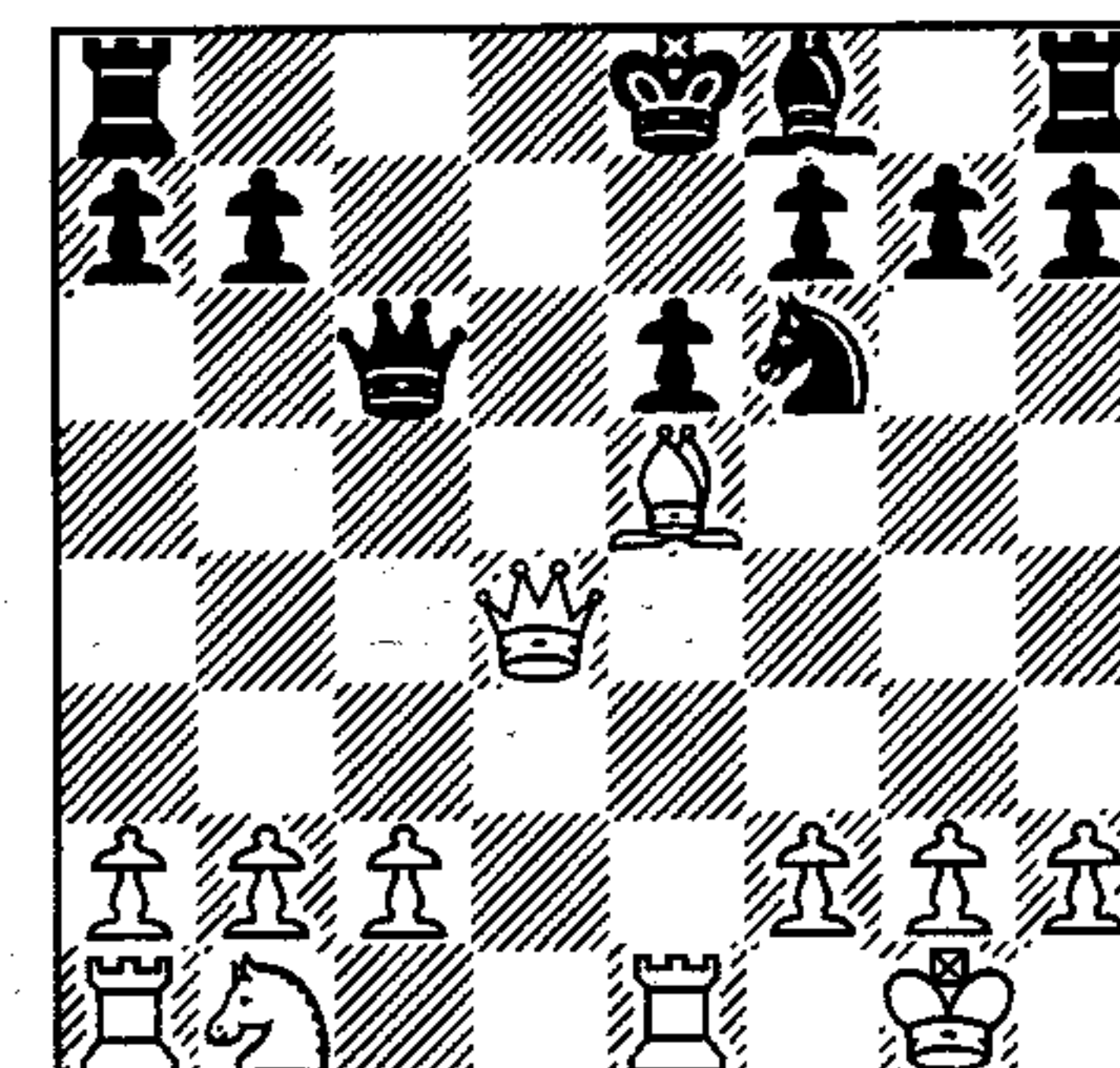
Aagaard-Turov
Copenhagen 2002



Here I played 24 ♖xe4?, believing that I could create the activity necessary to make a draw after the exchange of a pair of rooks. I was sadly wrong, though the position might hold some drawing chances after 24...♗xb5 25 ♖ac1 ♗c5 26 ♗xc5 ♖xc5. Here I played 27 h3? followed by 28 a4? and the rook manoeuvre ...♗f8-a8-a5 made it obvious that I had

two weaknesses and none of the activity I should have.

Analysis showed that 24 a4 ♗c5 25 ♖ac1 f5 26 ♗xc5! dxc5 27 ♖c3 would give White a lot of compensation for the exchange and possibly genuine winning chances. No computer could have told me that.



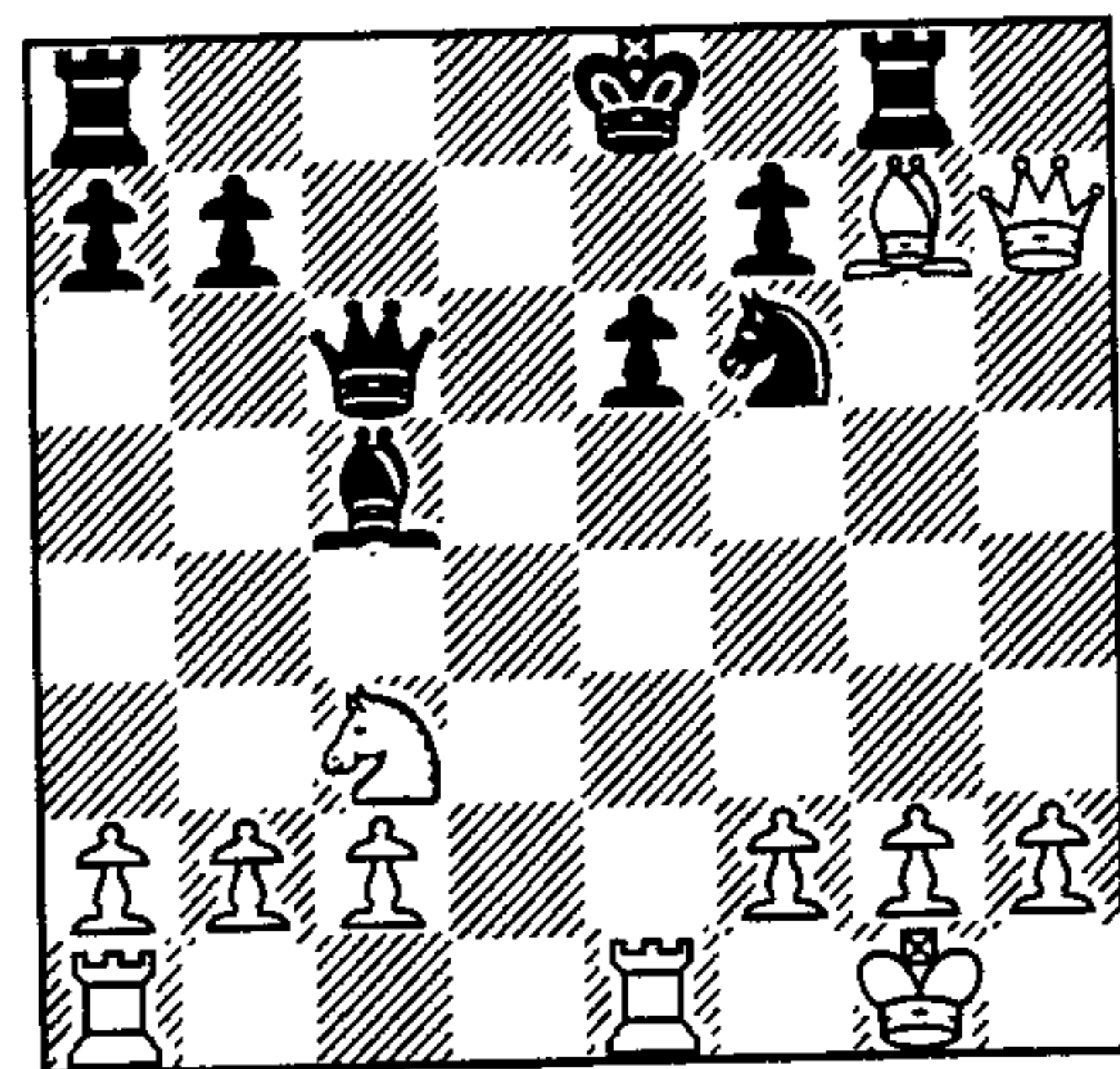
In this position I was Black against a very talented IM from Argentina, Rueben Felgaer, who made his final norm in this tournament (still Copenhagen Open 2002). We both saw the following line: 13 ♗xf6 gxf6 14 ♖xf6 ♗g8 15 g3 ♗g7 16 ♖g5 ♗f8 17 ♖c1 h5 with a complex struggle in which Black might very well be better. What neither of us considered was that after 14 ♗c3! ♗g8 15 ♗e4 Black is close to being positionally lost. It is quite funny that a young German IM, who is clearly stronger than myself, had actually intended to play 14 ♖xf6 against me in a game some months later. Of course I deviated from this line due to 14 ♗c3!

A computer could have made neither of these discoveries. I would like to say that I found them myself, analysing my games for hours and hours, but even that was not enough. Mark Dvoretzky found

them in an afternoon, going through my games quite rapidly.

Fritz, however, did find one big hole in my analysis in the game with Felgaer. After the moves

13 ♖c3 ♗c5?! (13...♗e7 with an even game was better) 14 ♖h4 ♖d7!? 15 ♗g3?! I was doing all right. But better had been 15 ♗xg7! ♗g8 16 ♖xh7 ♖f6 and now the discovery I should have found myself, but which I saved for Fritz:



17 ♗xe6+!!

17 ♖h6? ♗xf2+! (17...♗f8 18 ♖xf6 ♗xg7 19 ♖g5 ♖f8 20 ♖b5! serves only White's interests) 18 ♖h1 ♖g4 19 ♖g5 ♗xe1 20 ♗xe1 ♖f2+ 21 ♖g1 ♖b6 22 ♖f1 ♗d8 23 ♗e2 (23 ♖h4 ♗d2) 23...♖d1 and Black is better.

17...♖xe6 18 ♗xf6 ♗xf2+ 19 ♖h1 ♖g4 20 ♖e4+ ♖xe4 21 ♖xe4 ♗b6 22 ♗d1 ♗g4 23 ♖d6+ ♖d7 24 h3

24 ♖xb7+ ♖c6 25 ♖d8+ ♗xd8 26 ♗xd8 ♗c4 27 c3 ♗b8 is drawish.

24...♗g6 25 ♖c4+ ♖c7 26 ♗f1 and White has some advantage. By seeing tactics such as these after first being completely blind to them I do not only acquire more information about my games but I also increase my awareness

for them in the future. I have found that after starting to use this way of analysing my own games I have improved both my tactical ability (considerably) and my positional understanding. I advise others to find their own methods, of course, but it should pay to have these considerations in mind when approaching the task of analysing your games.

6) Check for structural assistance in ChessBase to gain additional insight

When we analyse our games we occasionally find that the principles of some types of positions completely evade us. This is when we have little idea of what candidate moves to look for and of which plans are important, or when we thought we had a good position and then suddenly nothing seems to work. On these occasions it is very useful to use the functions of *ChessBase* or similar programs to search on structure. This is usually pawn structures perhaps combined with ECO codes. Often a great revelation will come when we look through games between really strong players in positions we do not understand.

7) Tournament reports and Diagnosis of weaknesses

After having analysed all my games from a tournament there is something that I generally enjoy doing – I make a list of all my mistakes from my games, and describe them. Often I find that I make one or two recurring mistakes, and that these are not completely in the shape and form that I believed. A tactical mistake is not just a tactical mistake.

Often, as with the examples in this chapter, there is a common theme that embraces all the mistakes. In this section it is a lack of imagination. All the things I overlooked were because I did not look at them at all – not incorrect evaluation or miscalculation, but pure blindness.

After making this list and finding your most serious weaknesses it is natural to continue with:

8) Training based on tournament reports

If you know where you lose points there is nothing as logical as building a training program based on eliminating these weaknesses. For every weakness there is a remedy, and it is never the same. I hope you will find yours.

Explanation of Terms

Class players: Auto-thinking individuals.

Tournament reports: A report based on deep analysis of your latest tournament. Not just the games themselves, but also on the tendencies in your game. Designed to show the way forward.

Proposed Further Reading

The Road to Chess Improvement (Yermolinsky)

Art of Chess Analysis (Jan Timman)

In this book Timman analyses games to a level that can inspire you to see what depths chess analysis can reach.

Instructive Modern Chess Masterpieces (Igor Stohl)

This book is really impressive. The games are deeply analysed and very well annotated, although it might be considered heavy going from an average club player's point of view.

CHAPTER SIX

Positional Sacrifices

If you can't beat them, confuse them – Esben Lund.

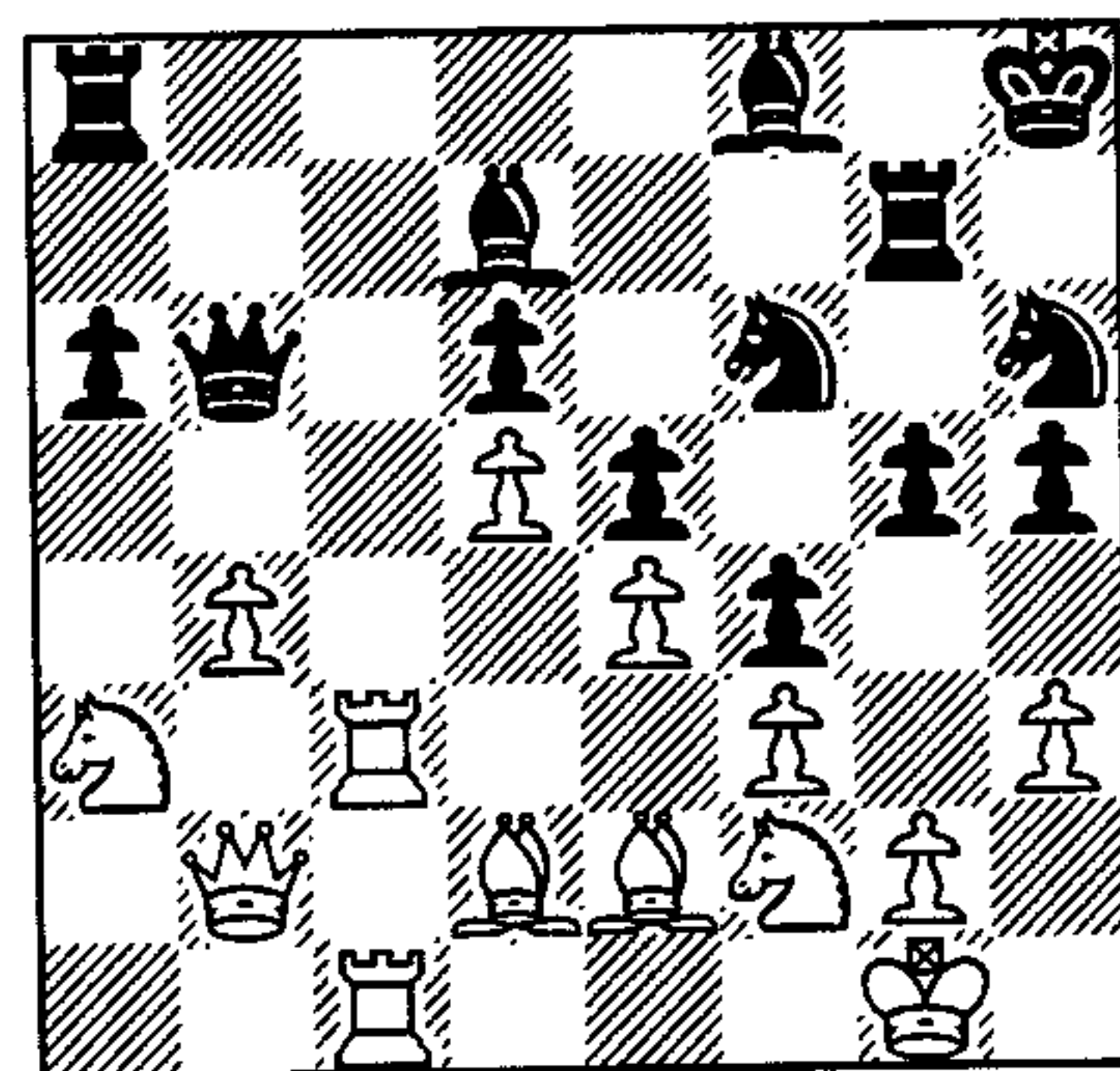
We all like to make sacrifices that lead to checkmate – not only because they look nice, but also because we win the game. We become aesthetically excited when we are able to sacrifice material for an attack, sacrifices that cannot be calculated but which later turn out to be correct, or at least very dangerous. These tend to be the ones that find their way into magazines and books.

Some players don't feel comfortable sacrificing material and others don't feel comfortable accepting 'free' pieces – it depends a lot on taste. Some players belong to the classical school, as exemplified by the likes of Capablanca, Smyslov, Petrosian, Fischer, Karpov and Kramnik. To a certain extent these have a universal style and sacrifice material from time to time. However, their main emphasis is on control, technique and structure. Then there are players like Alekhine, Tal, Shabalov, Kasparov, Shirov, Grischuk, Morozevich and others, who belong to what could be called the

dynamic tradition. For these players the initiative is more important than material. Thus far there seems to be no superior playing style.

To me there is a clear difference between sacrifices aimed at generating an initiative and those designed to gain lasting positional (often structural) advantages. Unfortunately it seems that chess literature fails to take this into account. In the following example the sacrifice is what I would call positional:

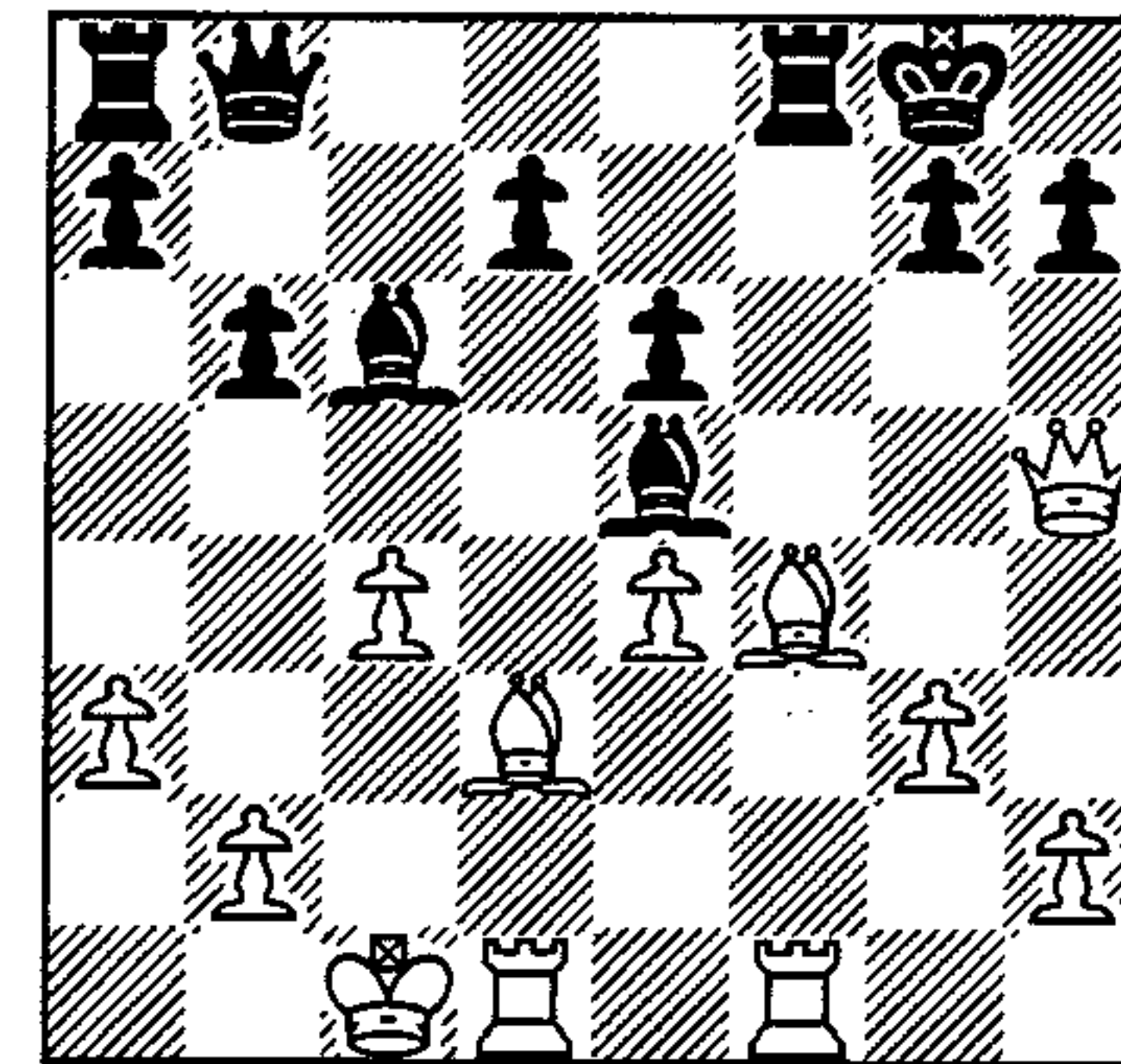
L.B.Hansen-Loginov
Stara Zagora 1989



Here White sacrificed with **28 ♖c6! ♗xc6 29 ♖xc6** and held a lasting initiative on the light squares. The reason why I would call this a positional sacrifice is that it is not just a matter of time and of getting to the king. The fact that the light-squared bishop is removed from Black's camp is very significant and, in the long-term, this slows down his activities on the kingside. Meanwhile White prepares a slow invasion on the light squares.

Another example, which is very famous, is the following.

Lutz-Karpov
Dortmund 1993

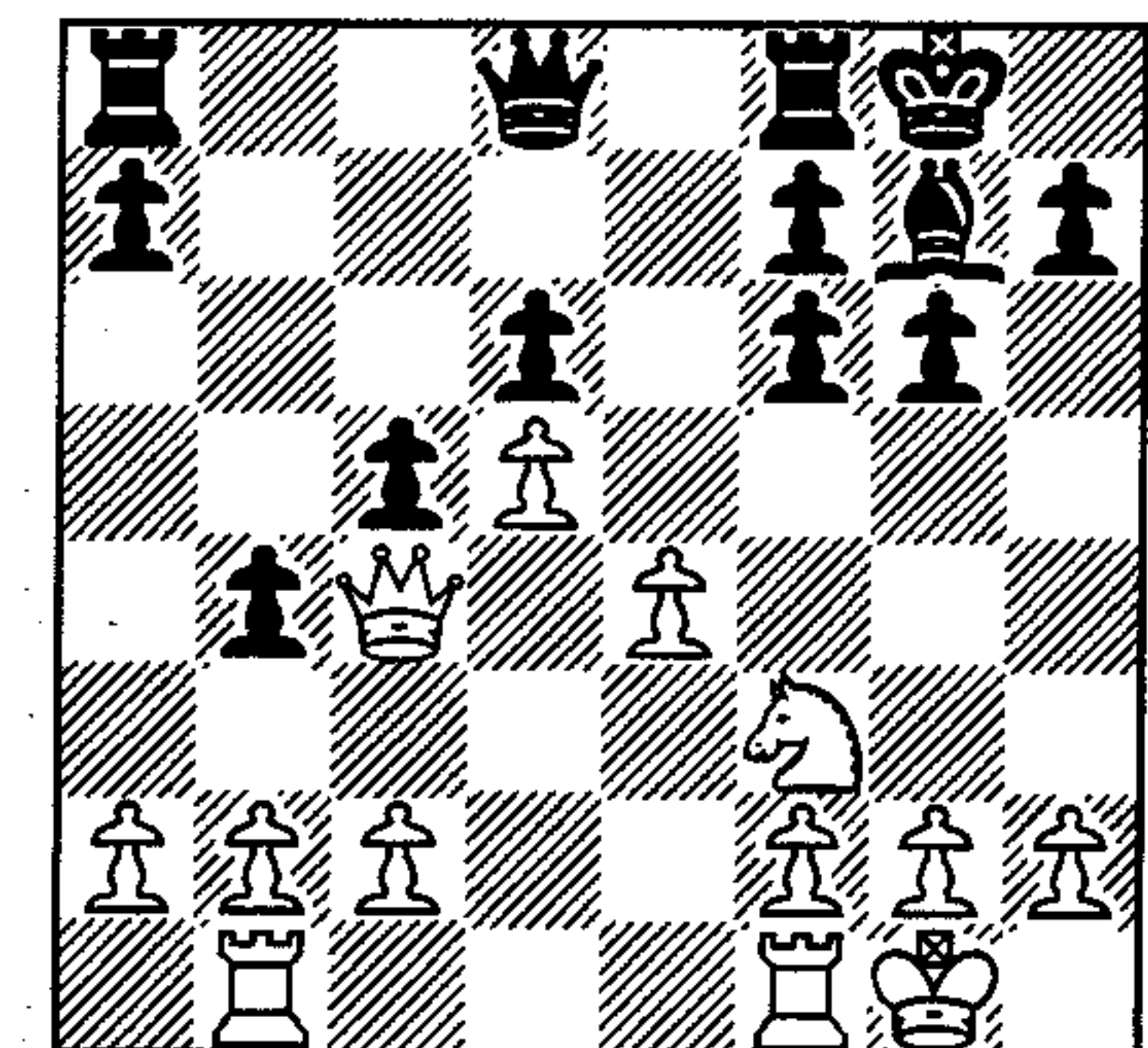


In this position Black earned a long-term advantage with **21...♗xf4! 22 gxf4 ♗xf4+** where the pawn, the domination of the dark squares and the somewhat weakened bishop on d3 proved important. Actually Black showed that it was not a matter of mating ideas when he followed up with **23 ♖b1 ♗e5! 24 ♗xe5 ♗xe5** with at least equal chances in the endgame (which he went on to win due to superior technique).

What is characteristic in all of these

examples is the following: *Material is just another positional factor.* It is sometimes important, sometimes not. What good is it to have an extra bishop and pawn if it is the classic 'wrong' bishop and rook's pawn and the defending king occupies the relevant corner? In such a position the fact that the corner is occupied is clearly a positional factor, and it clearly equals White's extra material. The same principle goes for a number of other situations. A simple illustration from one of my own games starts in the following position.

Aagaard-Olsen
Copenhagen 1999



I feel that this position is slightly better for White, but that nothing is yet decided. An important factor will be how the minor pieces come to function. But in the game Black decides to grab a pawn at the cost of significant time. White chooses to use the time to regroup his pieces, giving him a lasting positional advantage. I think a move like **14...♗c8!?**, intending **15 ♖d2 ♗h6**, provoking weaknesses, or perhaps even the immediate **14...♗h6!?**, should offer Black reasonable chances of fighting for

equality. In the game White is winning within a few moves.

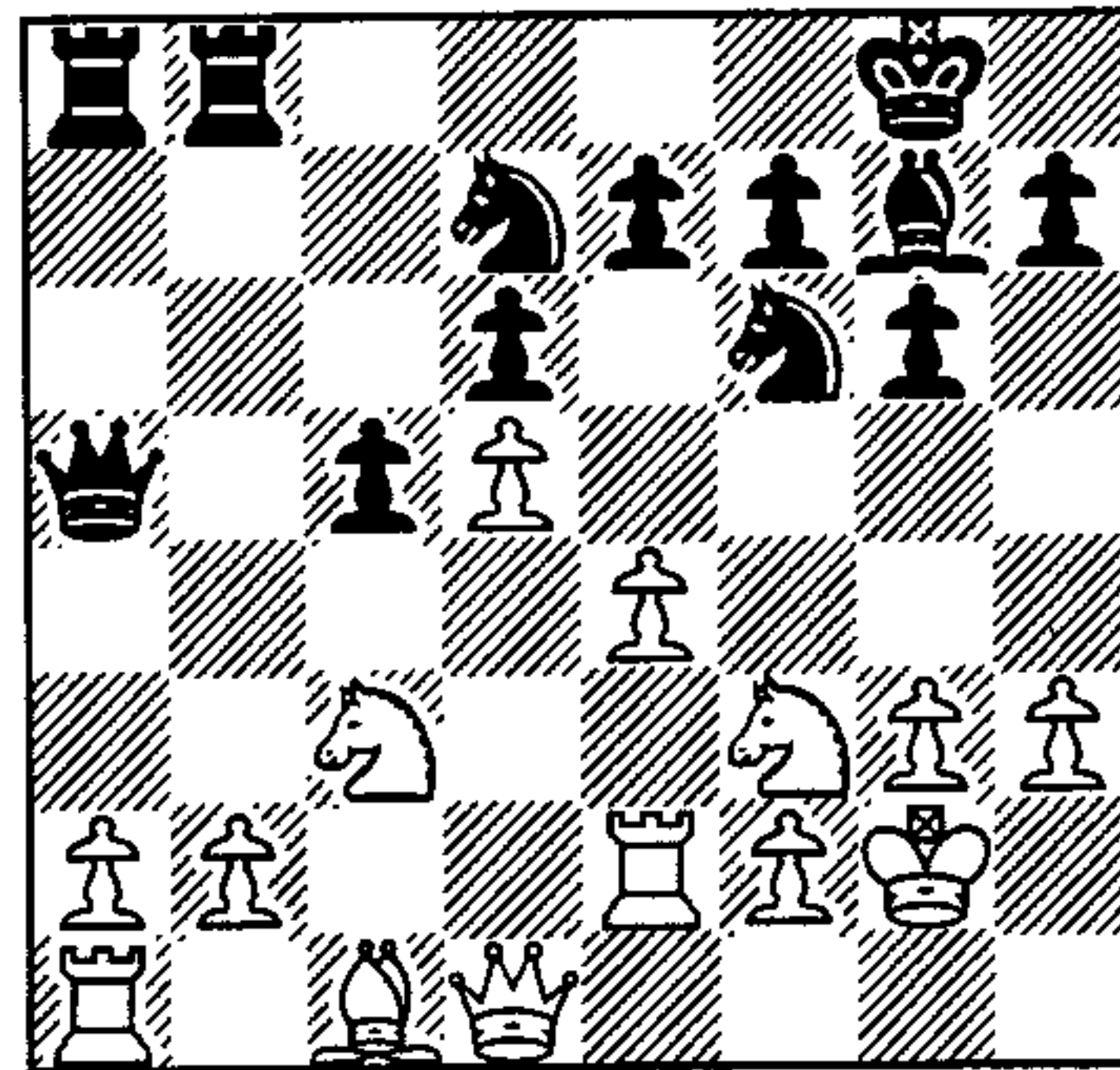
14...♖d7 15 ♖d3 ♖a4 16 ♘d2 ♗xa2 17 ♘c4 ♖a6 18 ♙a1 ♗b5 19 ♙a5 ♖d7 20 ♙a6 f5 21 exf5 ♗xf5 22 ♗xf5 gxf5 23 ♙fa1 ♙fe8 24 ♔f1 ♙f8 25 f3 ♙e7 26 ♙e1 ♙c7 27 ♙e3 ♙d8 28 b3 ♙cd7 29 ♙e1 ♙g7 30 ♘e3 f4 31 ♘f5 ♙e5 32 g3 ♙c7 33 ♙e4 fxc3 34 hxc3 ♙f6 35 ♘xd6 ♙e7 36 ♙xe7 ♙xe7 37 ♘f5 ♔f8 38 ♙xa7 ♙d6 39 f4 ♙b8 40 ♙b7 ♙d6 41 ♔e2 1-0

As I indicated above, a positional sacrifice is compensated in structural advantages, a dynamic sacrifice is compensated in gain of tempo and threats of mate or material gain. Of course there are mainly borderline cases, but when you have to decide whether or not to sacrifice it is important that you understand what kind of sacrifice you are contemplating. If it is a positional sacrifice, then you will have compensation independent of time, being able to improve your position slowly. On the other hand, a sacrifice based on attack or other combinational properties requires you to act accordingly. A good example of positional compensation is the Benkő Gambit, where situations such as the following are common.

see following diagram

This is a theoretical position taken from the game Korchnoi-Adorjan, Germany 1998. Black has positional compensation because of the two half-open files and the strong bishop. However, this compensation can be debated, and White does have a full pawn more.

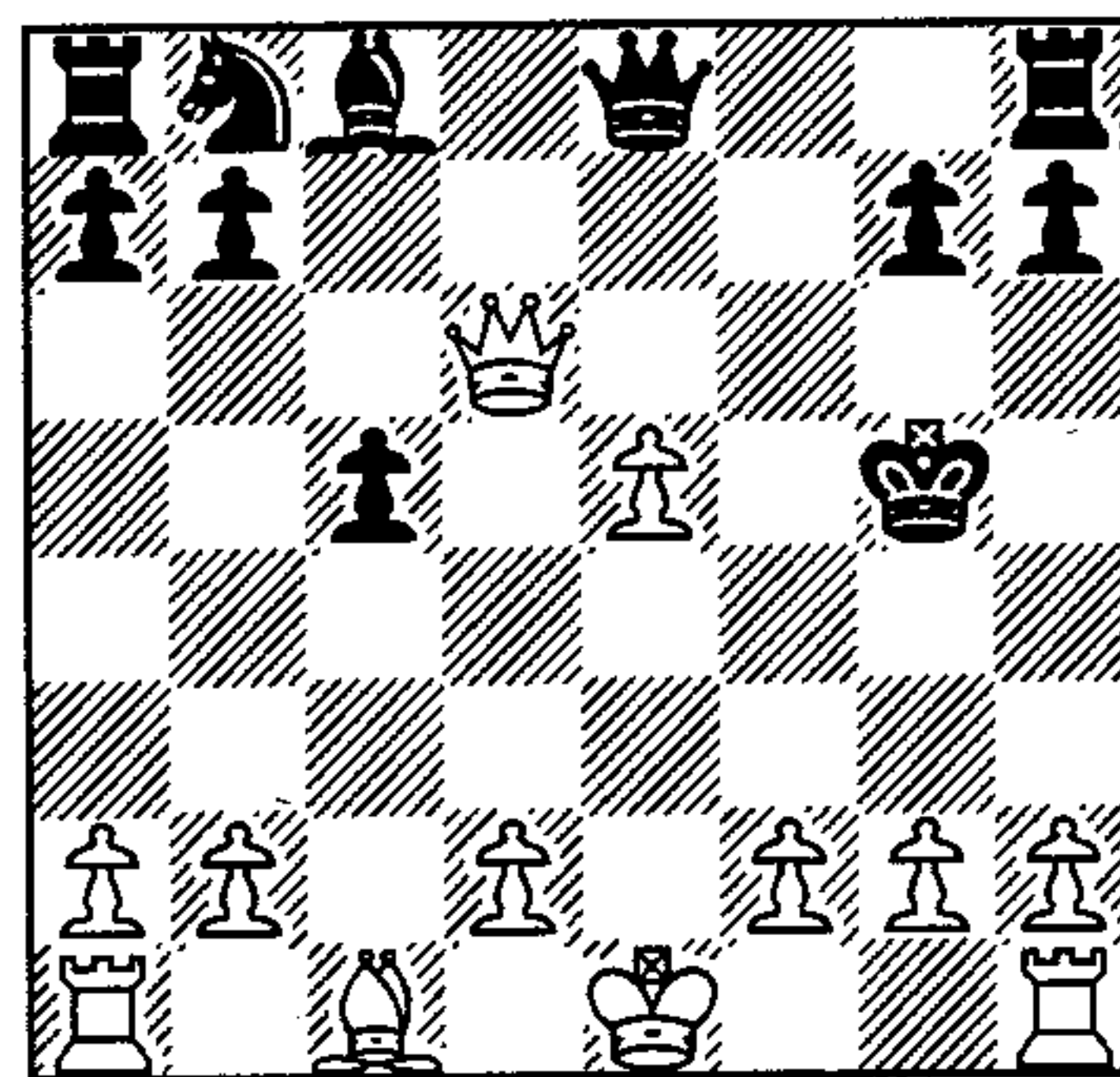
Korchnoi played this and four similar games in the period of 1998-2000 without conceding even a draw. These excellent results are mainly down to his great playing strength. Alexander Khalifman has a score of 3½/6 with Black in related positions.



But the main thing is that Black need not prove his compensation immediately since it is of a positional nature and therefore long-term. Whether it is enough is another question.

In the following position the compensation is of immediate character.

Nezhmetdinov-Mikenas
Kazan 1948



This position is from the 11th match

game between Rashid Nezhmetdinov, one of the greatest attacking players, and Mikenas, played in Kazan in 1948. In this position White has compensation for the piece mainly because of the exposed black king which, if it were to crawl to safety on h7 or g8, would severely reduce White's compensation to inadequate. Therefore White needs to act on his compensation as soon as possible. But Black committed an error...

15...♖d8?

Nezhmetdinov gives 15...♘c6 16 d4+ ♔h5 17 ♗xc5 ♗e7 with chances for both sides, but I find it hard to believe that White should be okay here. An endgame would be better for Black due to the opposite coloured bishops and the way White's pawn structure works against the c1-bishop while helping Black's minor pieces. In my opinion White needs to accelerate development if he is to demonstrate compensation in a position like this – but he simply cannot. After 16 0-0 Black would have the very nice move 16...♔h5!!, giving him the better game. The idea behind the move is to side-step all the possible dangerous checks. Note that since White has used up all the minor pieces capable of operating on the light squares the king is as safe on h5 as it would be elsewhere. This is an instructive example of a sacrifice in which the requirement is an immediate attack, but where the immediate attack is not a possibility, and the sacrifice (in this case starting with 9 ♙xf7+) should be held responsible for the sad state of White's position.

16 d4+ ♔f5 17 g4+!

Now the situation has changed.

White has a strong attack.

17...♔e4 18 ♗xc5 ♙f8

Nezhmetdinov was not one to provide lengthy analysis of his games; he offered various ideas. Here he mentions 19 f3+ as a threat, which can be seen in the line 18...♘c6 19 f3+ ♔xf3 20 ♗c4! and White has a winning attack. One line is 20...♗h4+ 21 ♔d1 ♔e4 22 d5+ ♔xe5 23 ♙e1+ ♔f6 24 g5+ etc.

19 0-0 ♔f3 20 h3 b6 21 ♗c3+ ♔e4 22 ♗c4! 1-0

Using sacrifices to unbalance the game in order to improve the prospect of generating winning chances is probably one of our favourite ways to burn bridges before we cross them. It is one of the things that makes chess both difficult and interesting. In modern chess, sacrifices designed to create an initiative are very common, and top players have a rather pragmatic attitude to being an exchange up. In a training session with Mark Dvoretsky, where we analysed my games, it turned out that I had continually missed strong exchange sacrifices that Mark had spotted relatively easily. To be a strong positional player it is necessary to have a freer relationship with material matters than is the case with most average (rated) players. *Material is merely another positional factor.* It is as simple as that.

If you would like to delve deeper into positional sacrifices I can warmly recommend two books on the subject, namely McDonald's *Positional Sacrifices* and Dunnington's *Understanding the Sacrifice*. Both books are filled with interesting subjects, and both authors have my deepest respect.

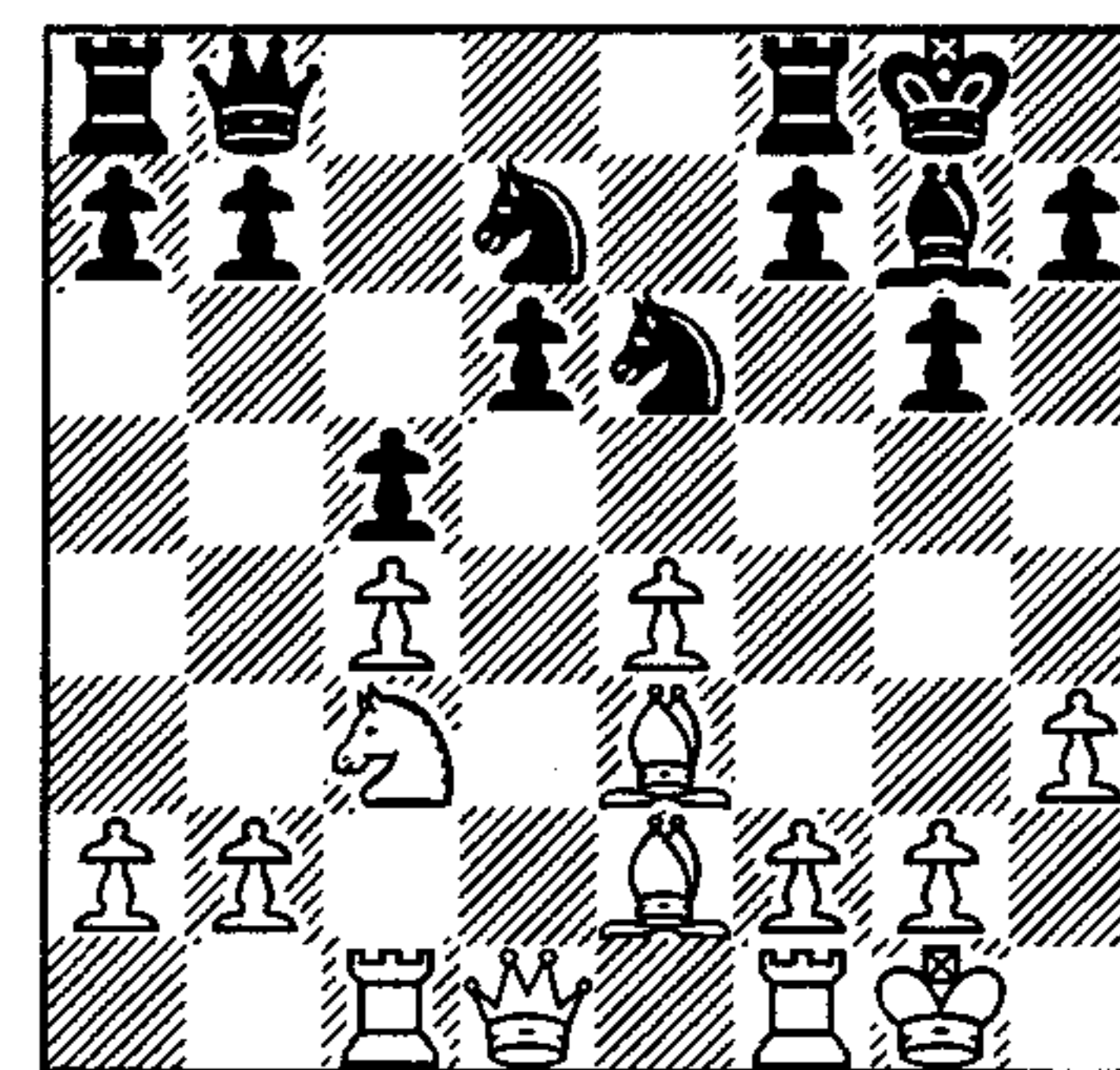
CHAPTER SEVEN

Positional Exercises

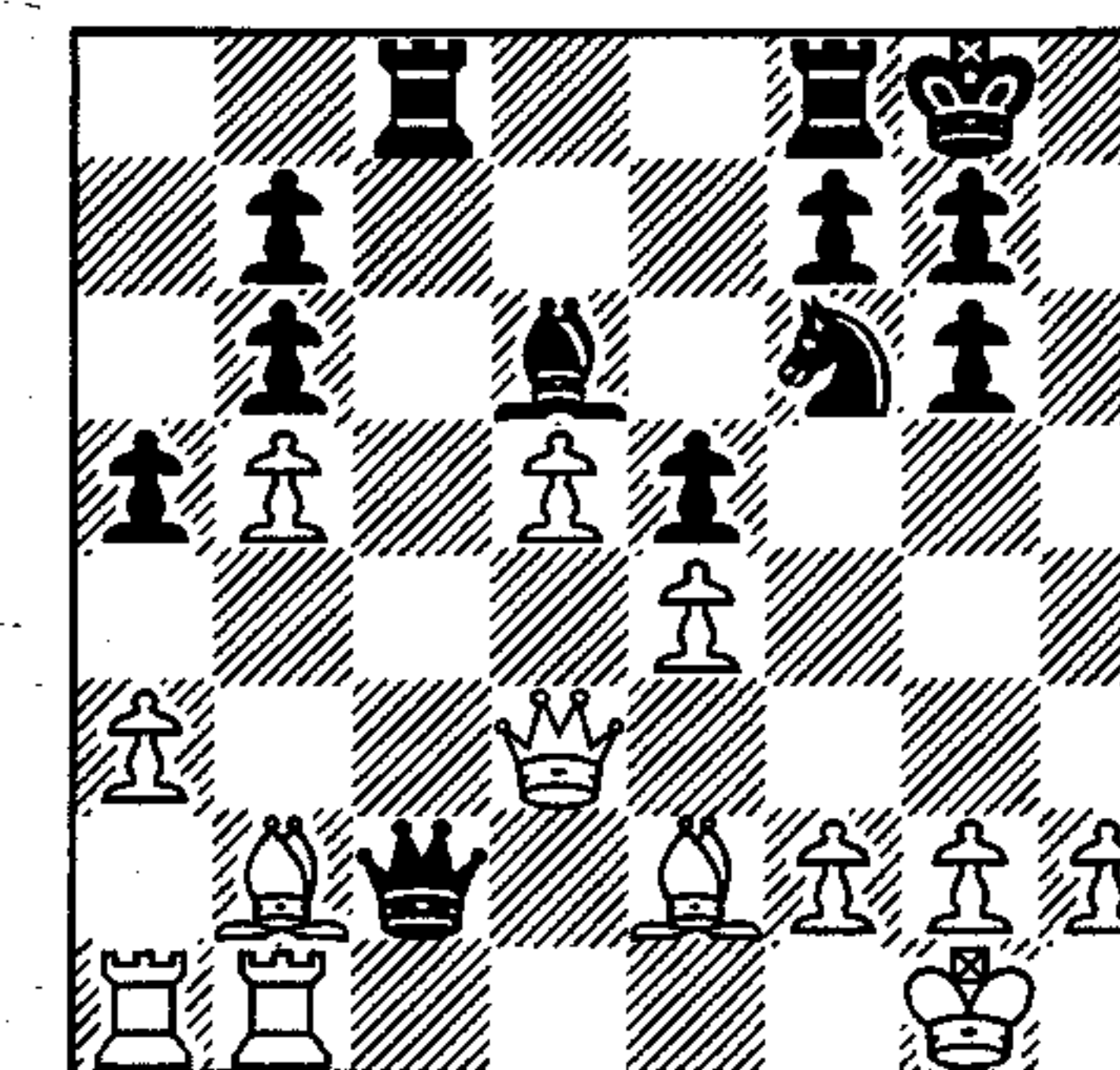
These positional exercises are all taken from the email training program I ran during 2002. I would suggest that you take 15-20 minutes to solve each exercise. Set a chess clock if that makes you feel more comfortable. The idea behind the exercises is not to guess the best move but to find it and, subsequently, find the underlying plan. Solving all of these exercises and comparing your solutions with my proposed solutions will give you a lesson in positional chess that is more valuable than any other I would be able to propose. The solutions tend to be, not surprisingly, a reflection of the previous chapters. In order to fully understand everything below it might be a good idea to read these, should you

not yet have found the time.

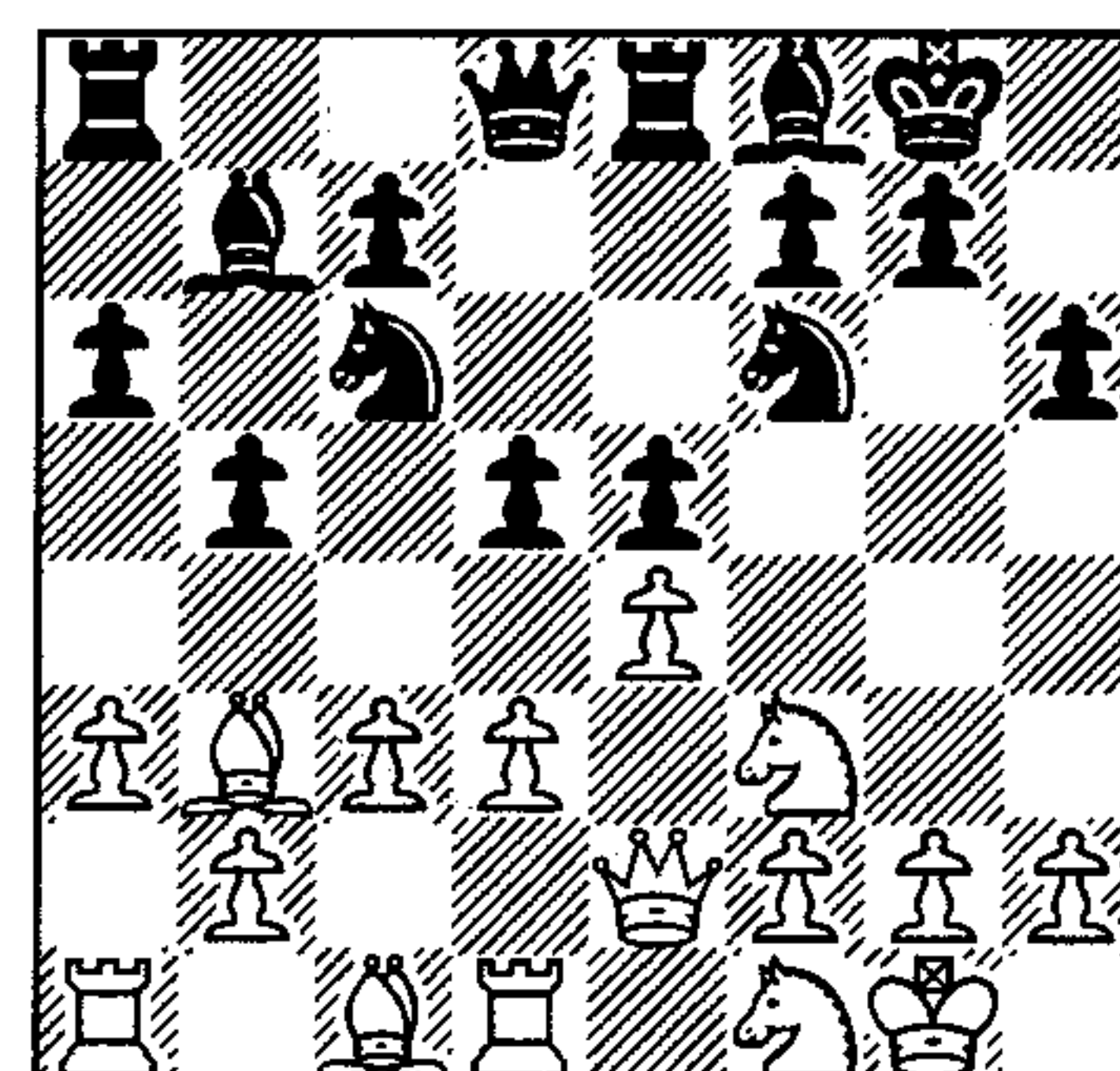
In all the exercises I have a distinct idea regarding the best move. I have invested considerable time in these positions and I have checked them with an average of 5-10 pupils and participants in my e-mail program. In 95% of the cases my own investigations and those of my pupils and participants in the program have validated the decision and annotations of the world class players who played these positions. Compared to most other positionally oriented workbooks, this has given me an opportunity to understand which exercises were working and which were not. I hope you will have enjoyable and educational hours with these exercises.



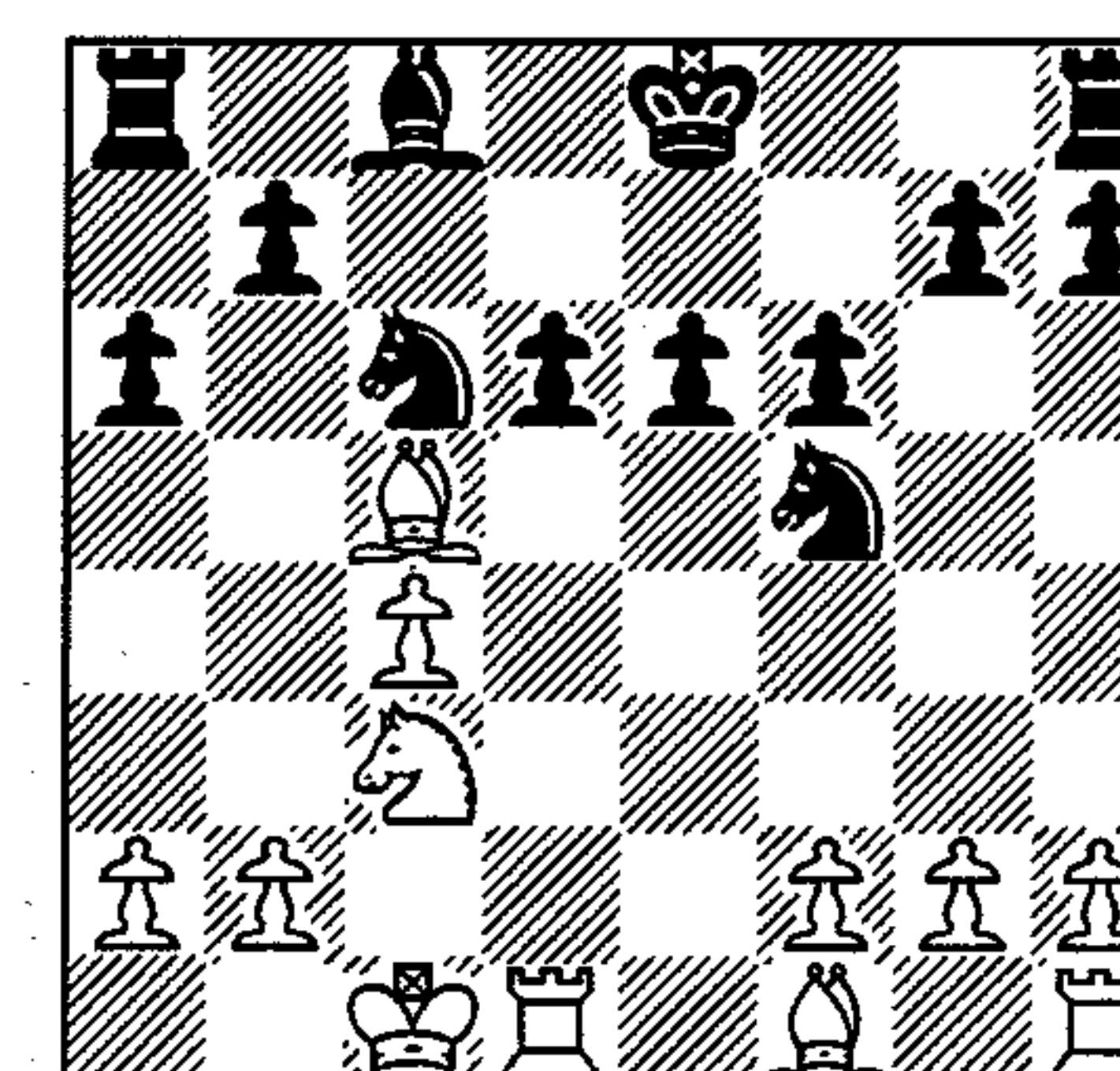
Exercise 1: White to move



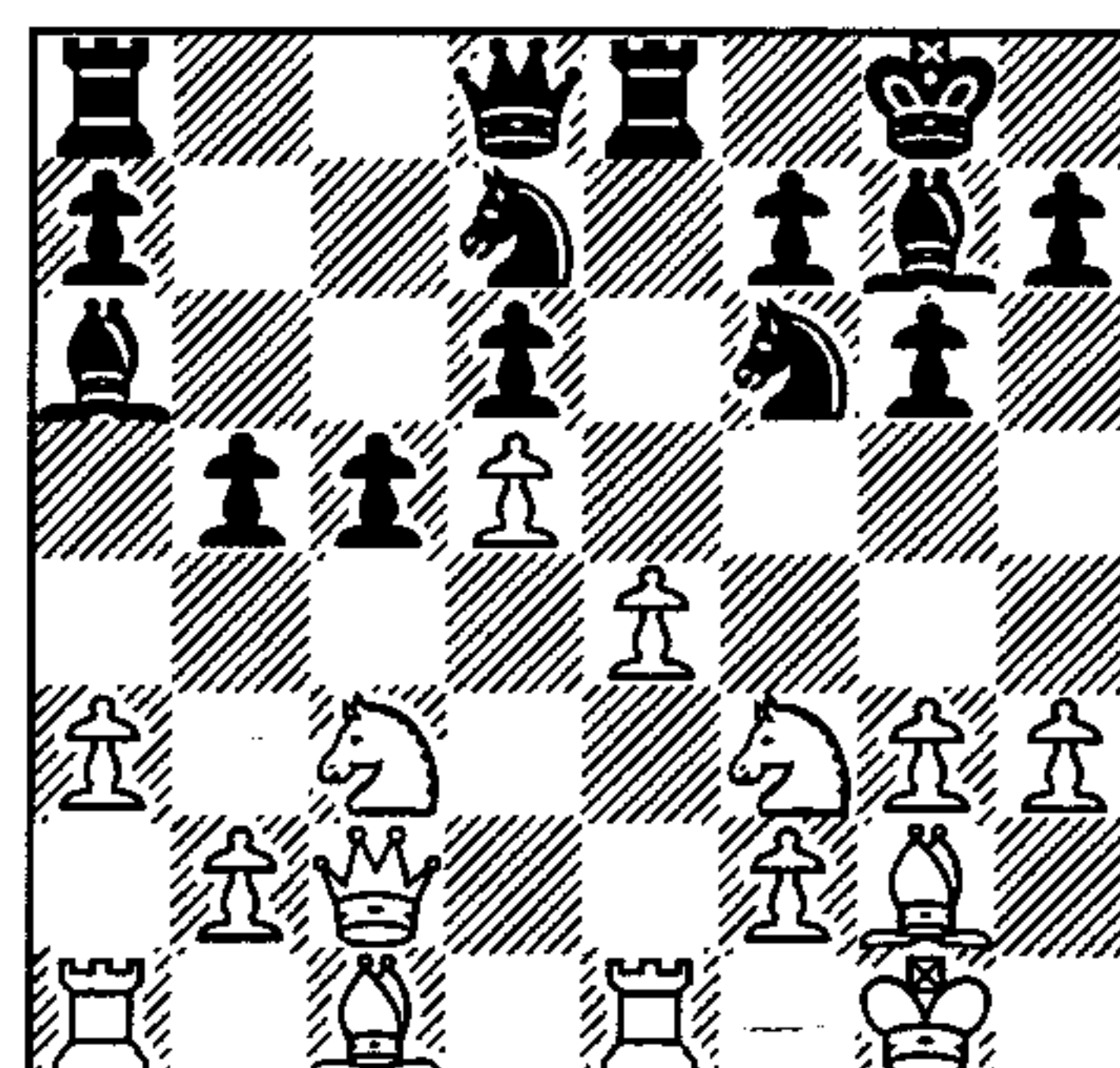
Exercise 4: Black to move



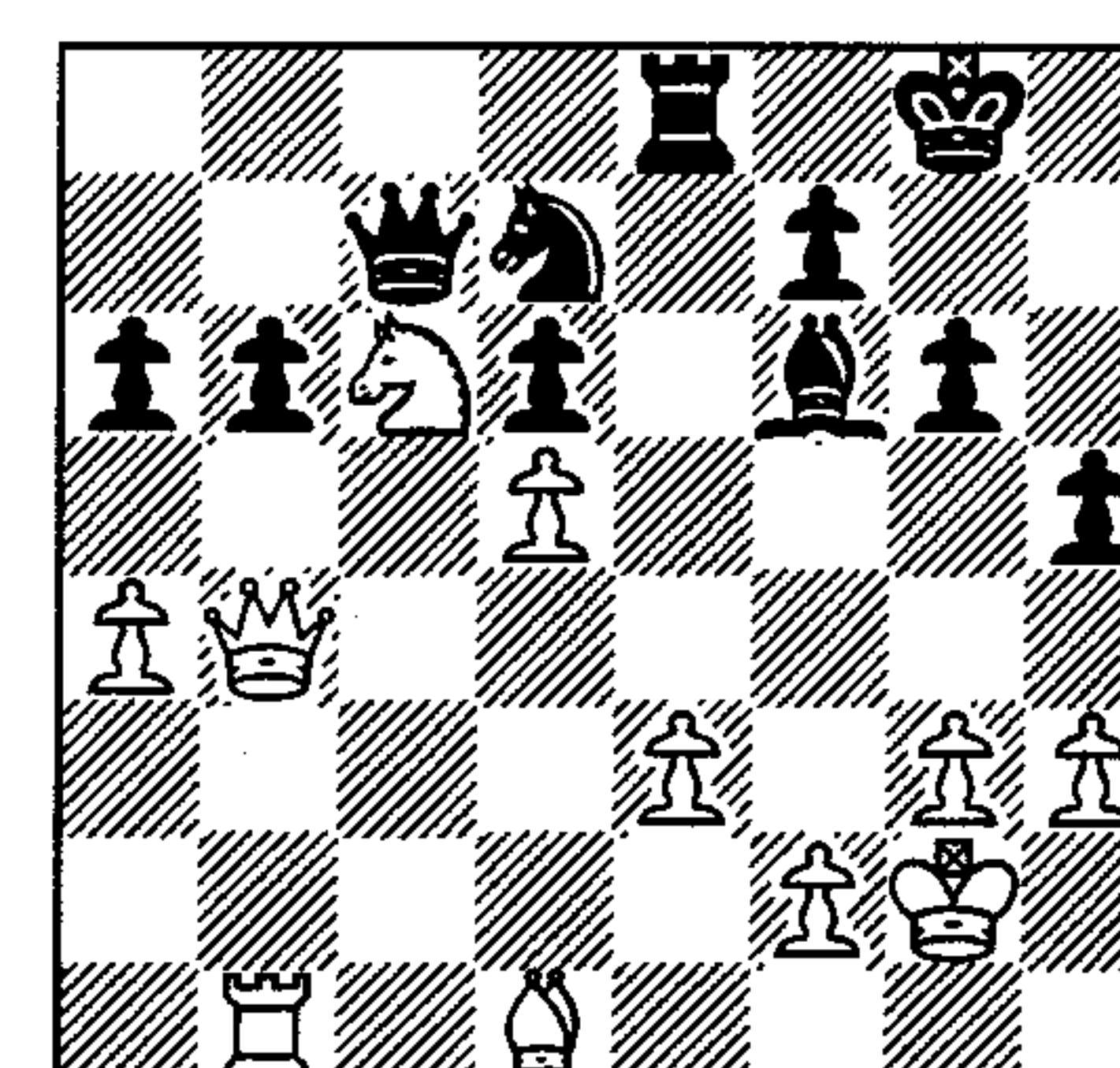
Exercise 2: Black to move



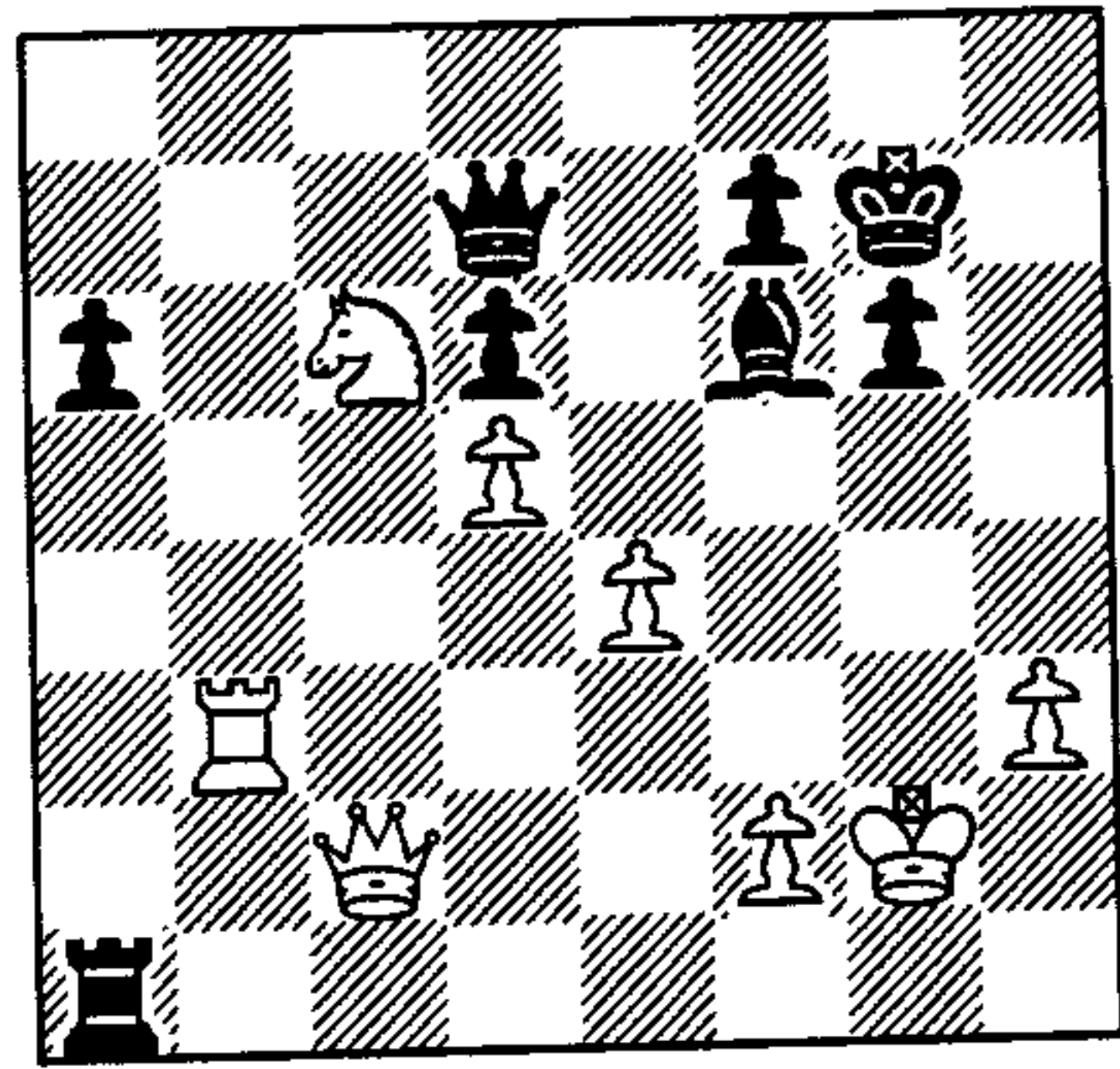
Exercise 5: White to move



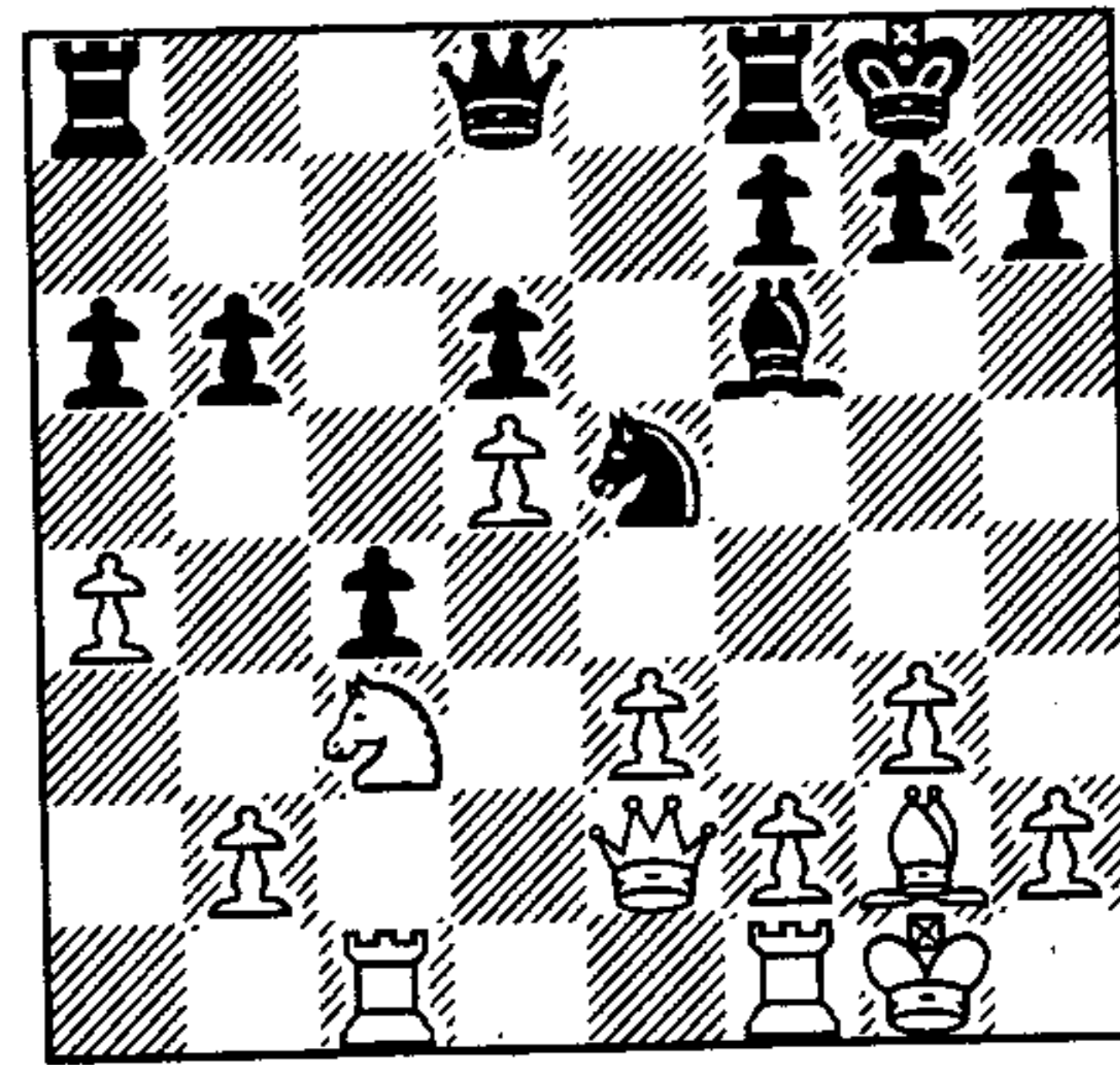
Exercise 3: Black to move



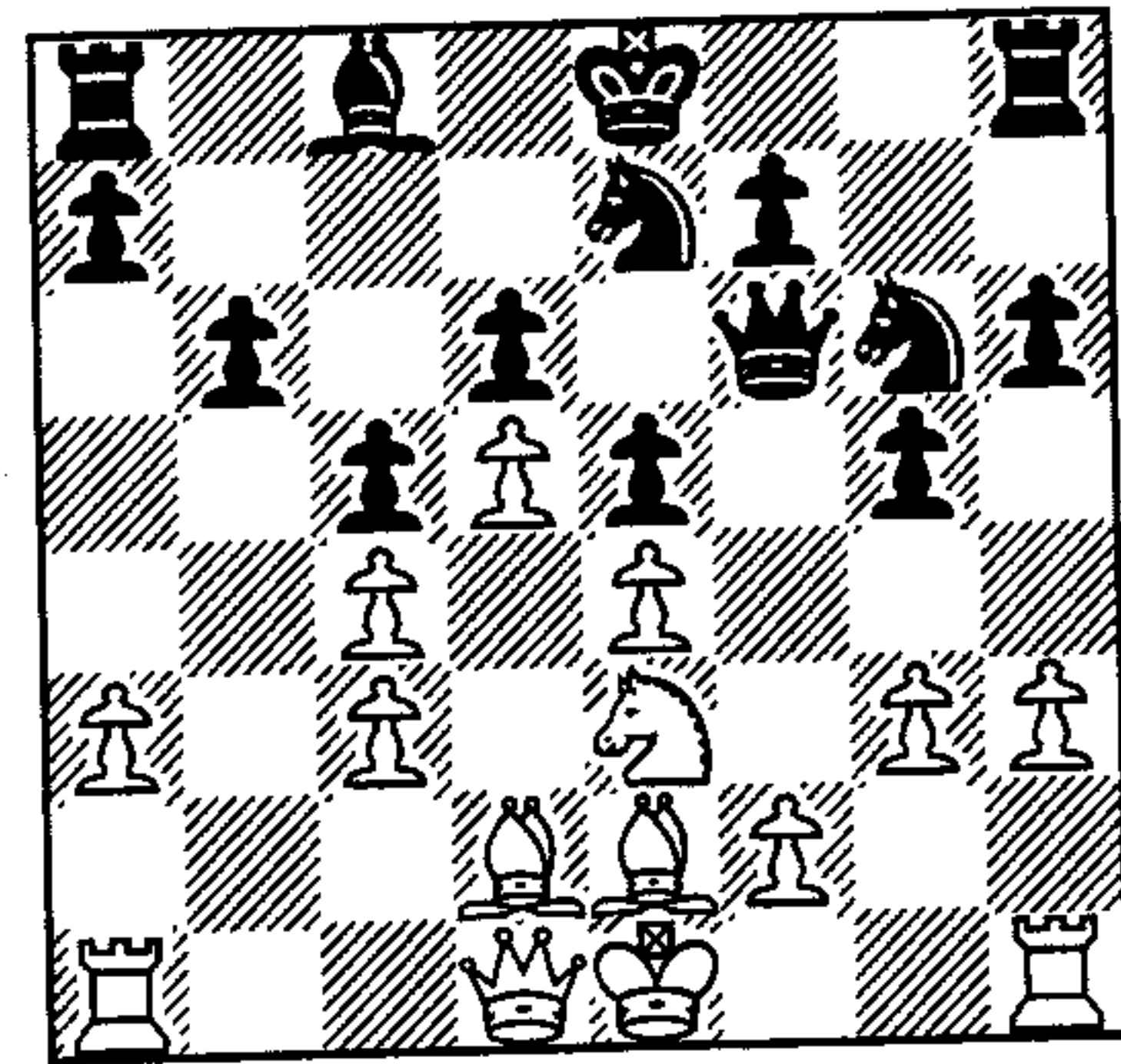
Exercise 6: White to move



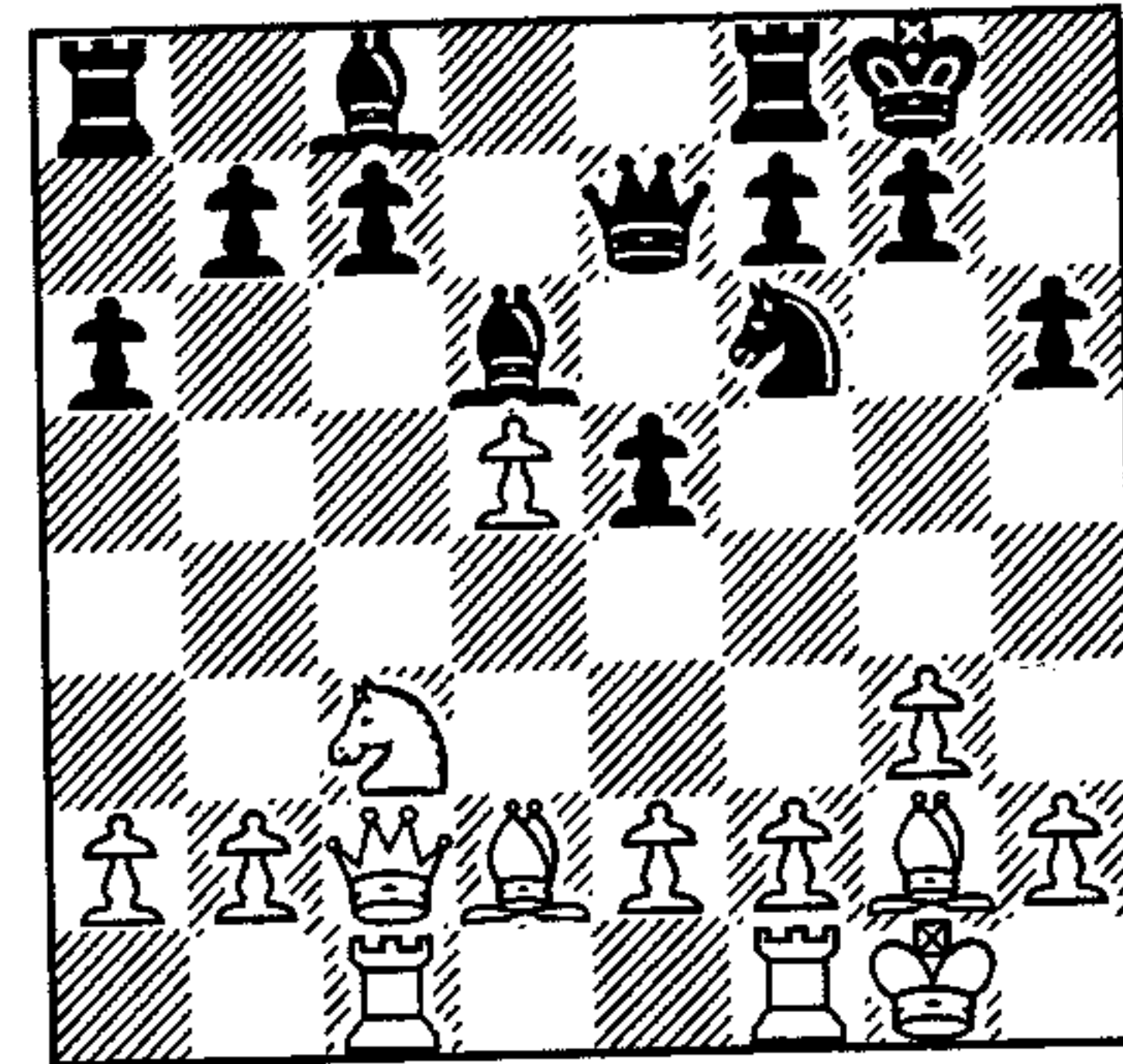
Exercise 7: White to move



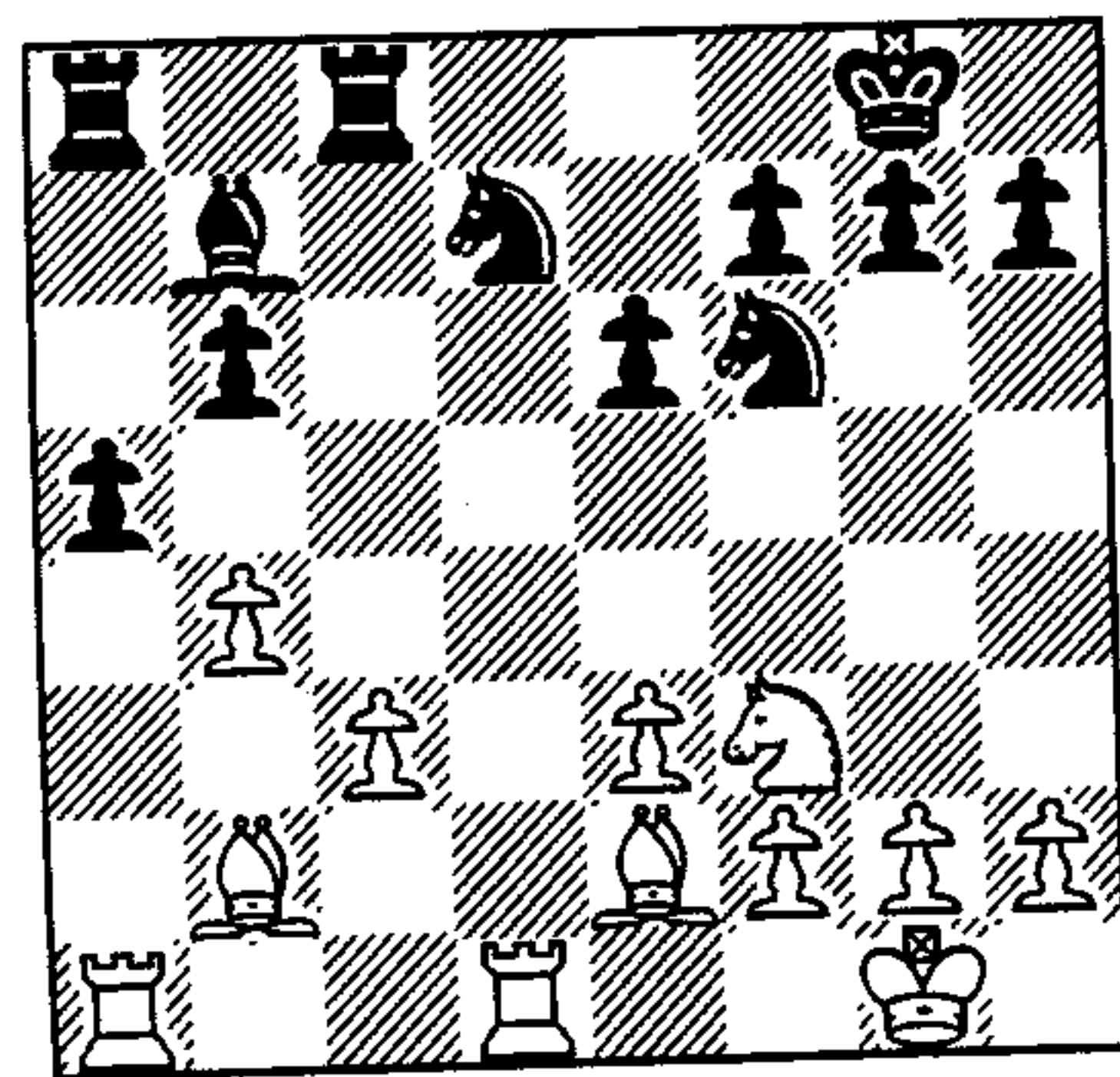
Exercise 10: White to move



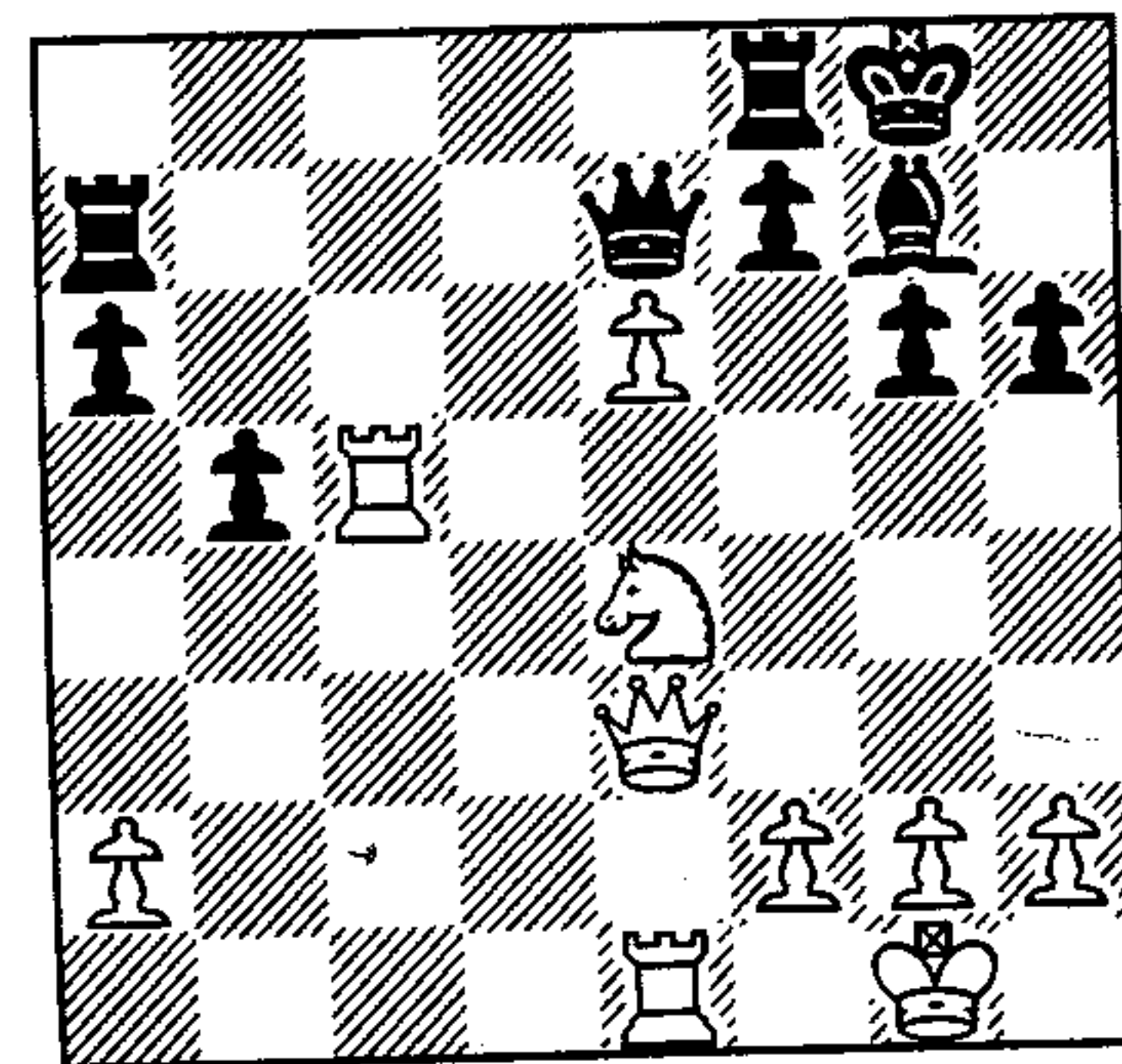
Exercise 8: Black to move



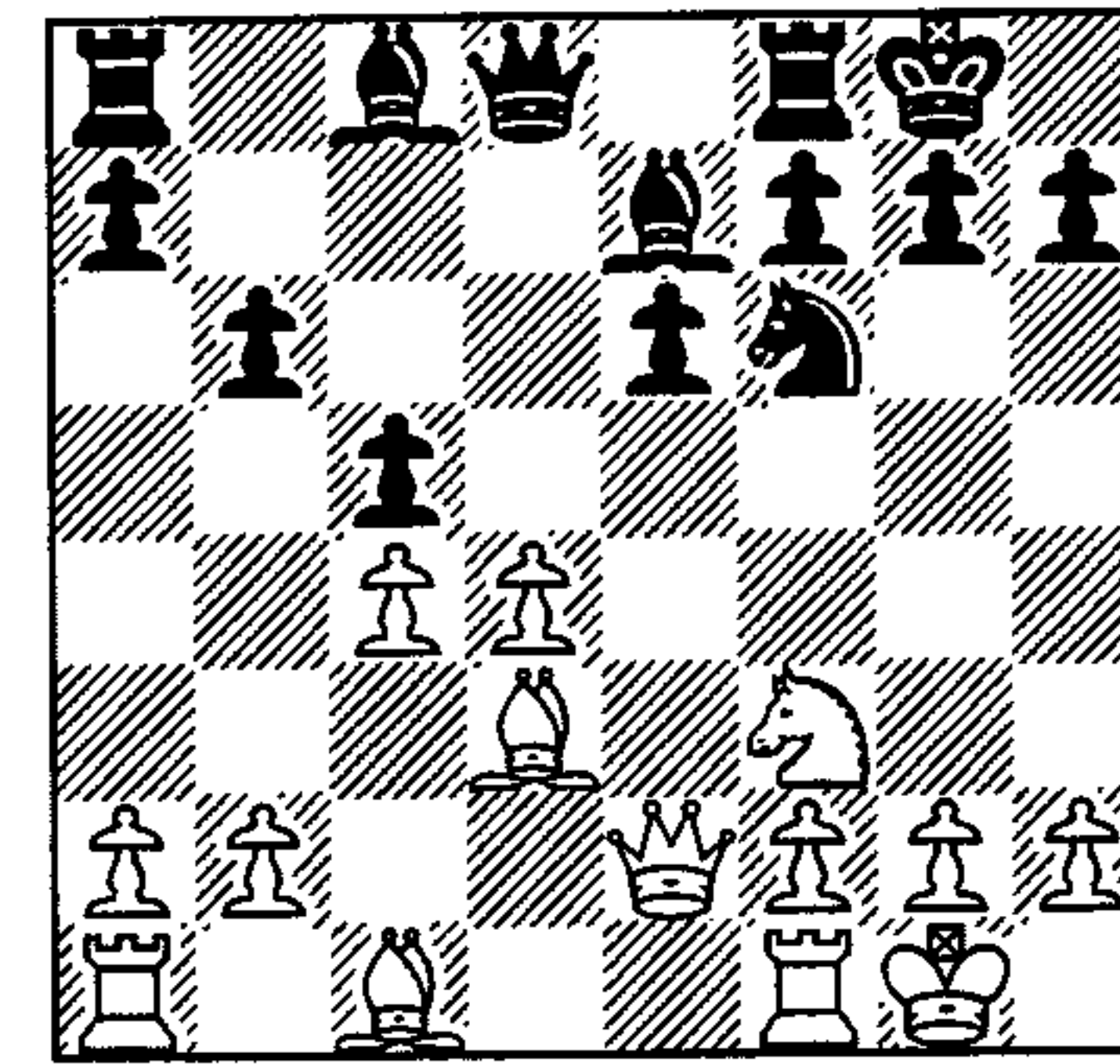
Exercise 11: White to move



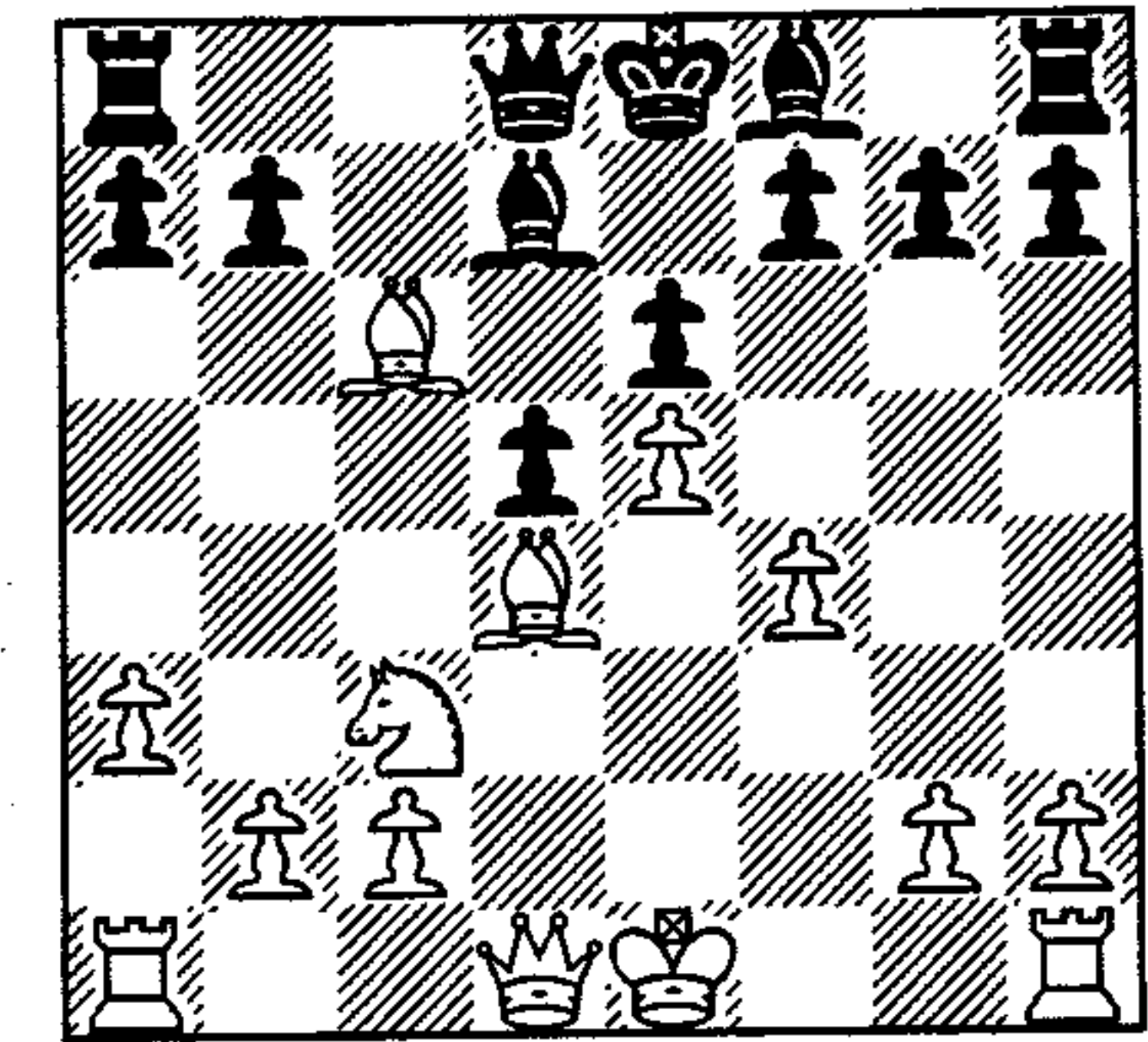
Exercise 9: White to move



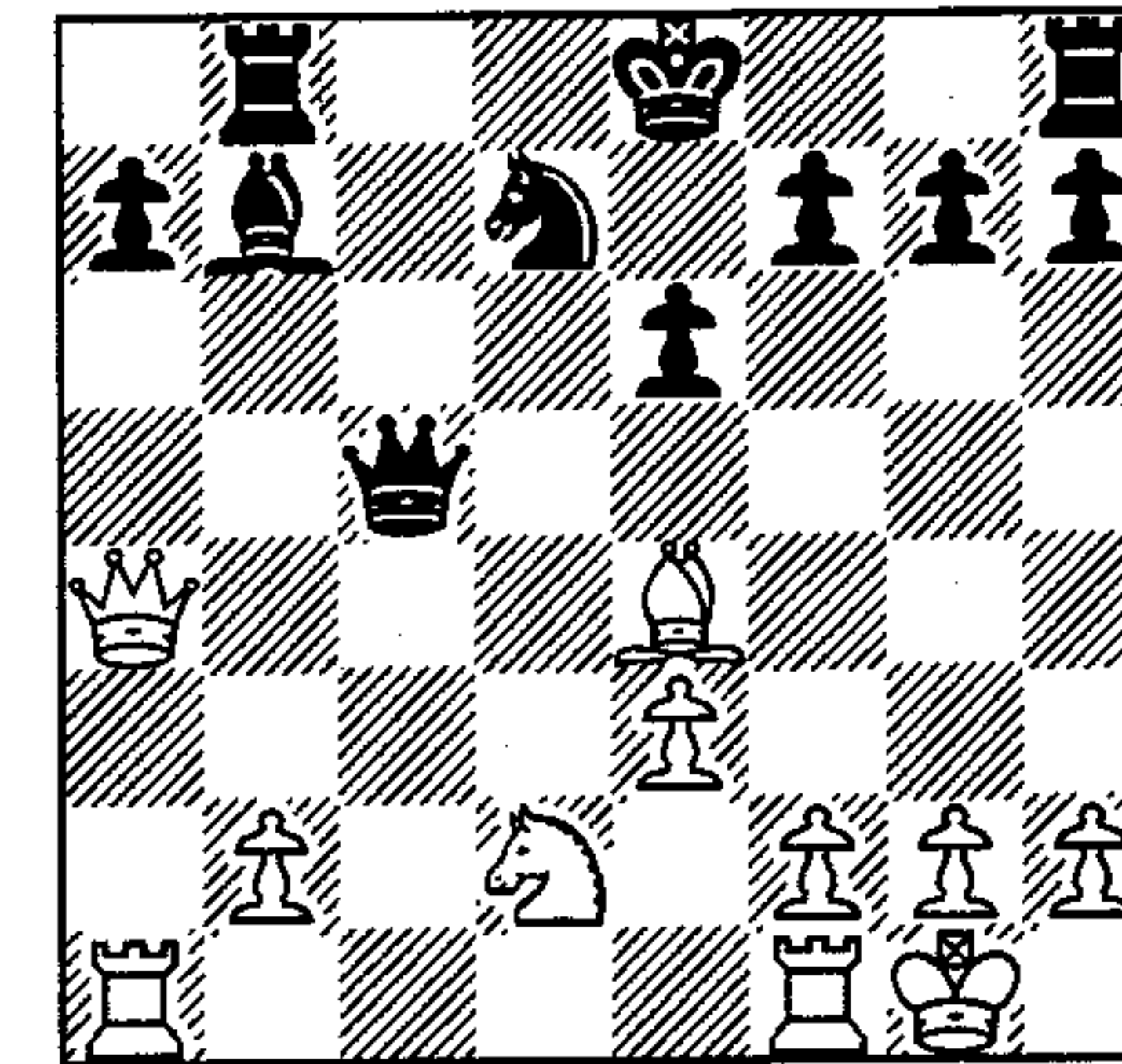
Exercise 12: White to move



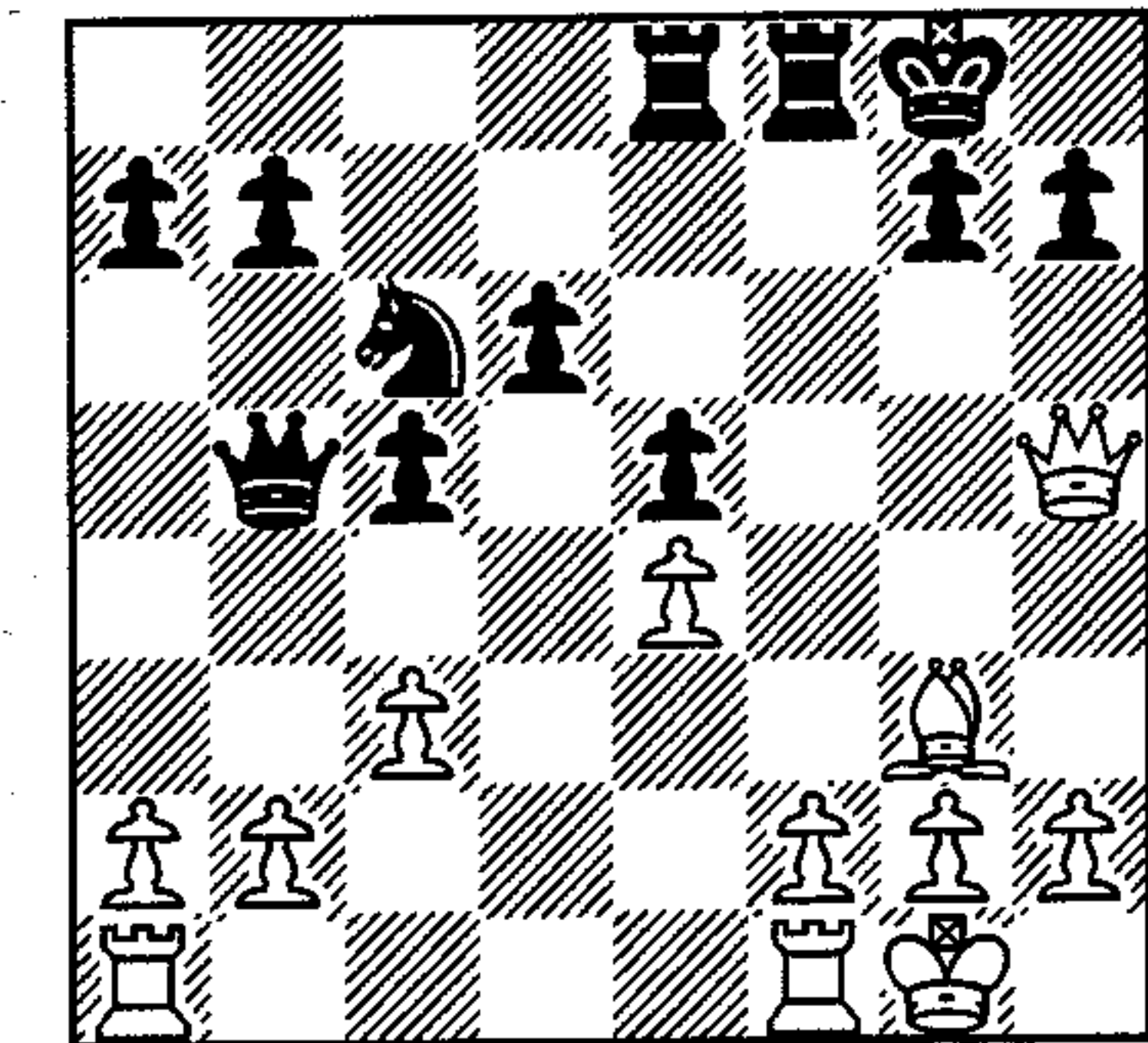
Exercise 13: White to move



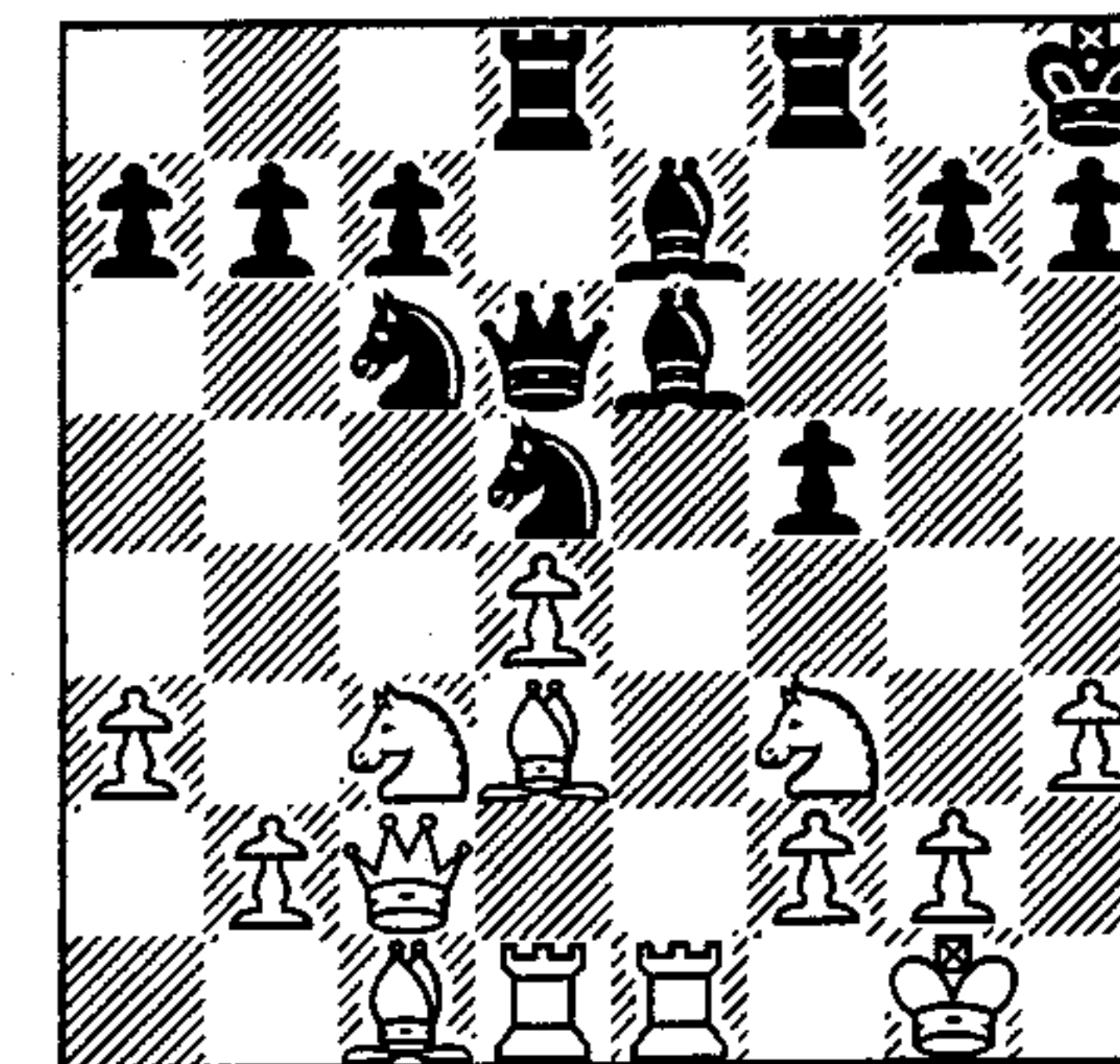
Exercise 16: Black to move



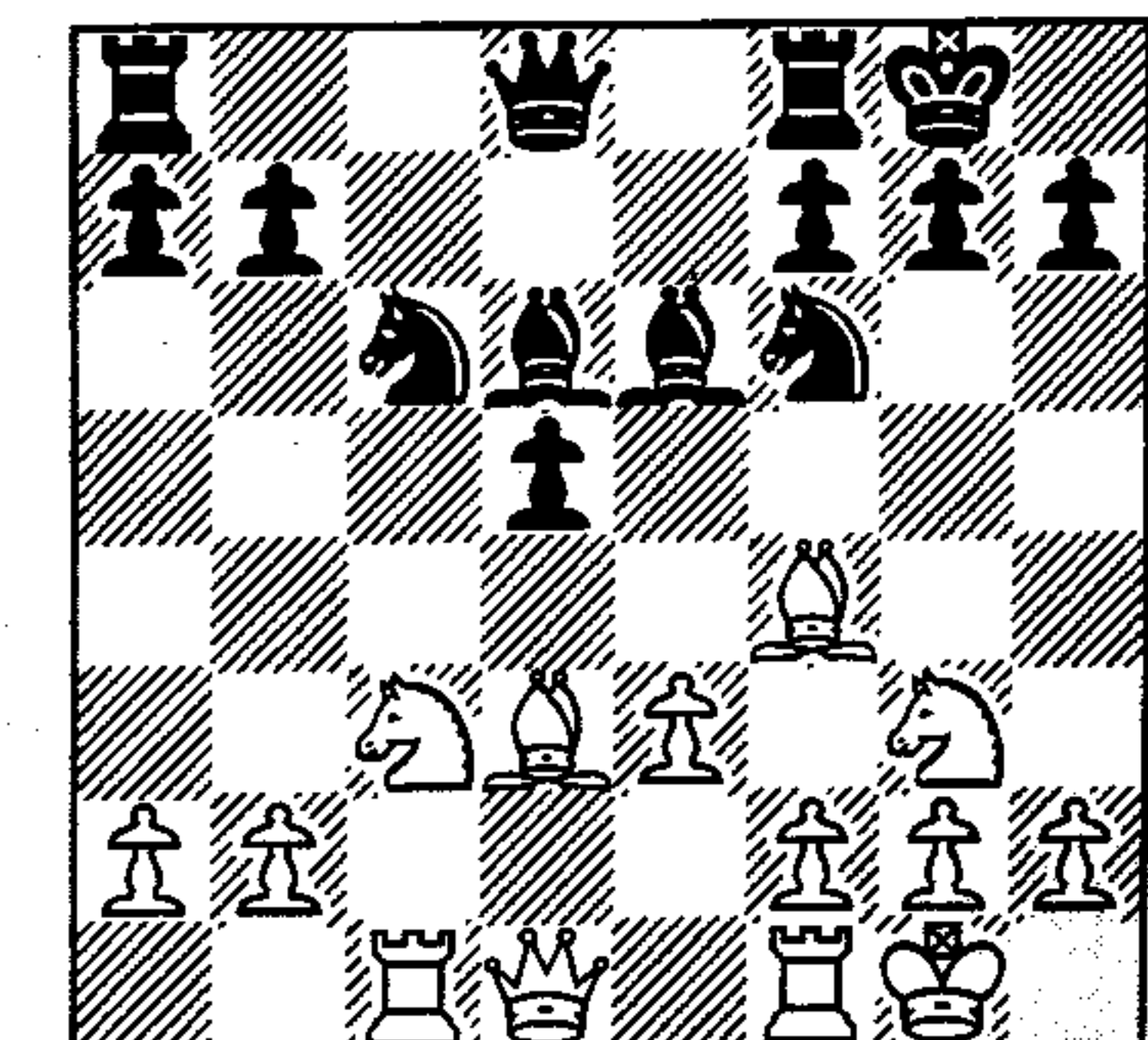
Exercise 14: Black to move



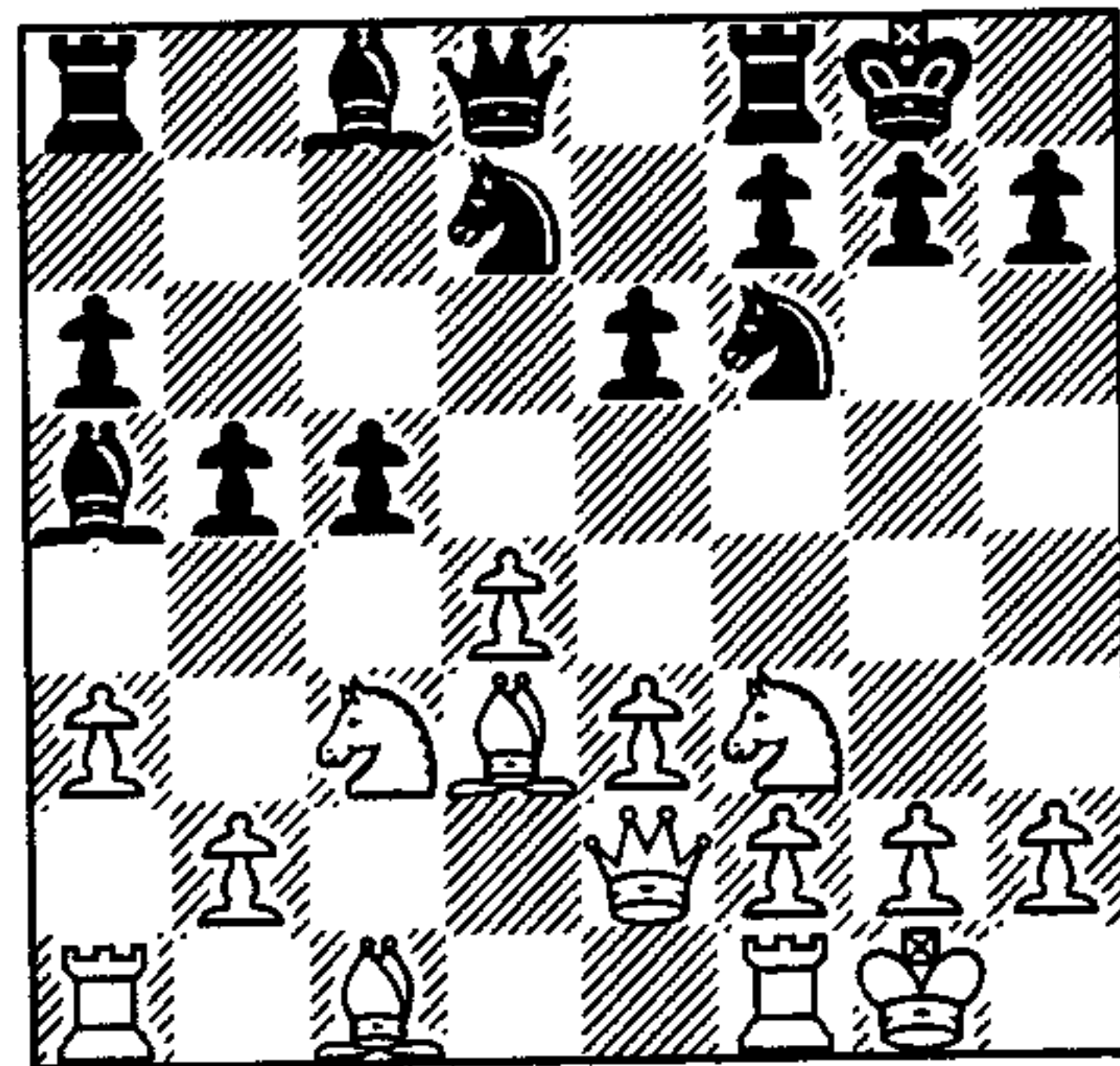
Exercise 17: White to move



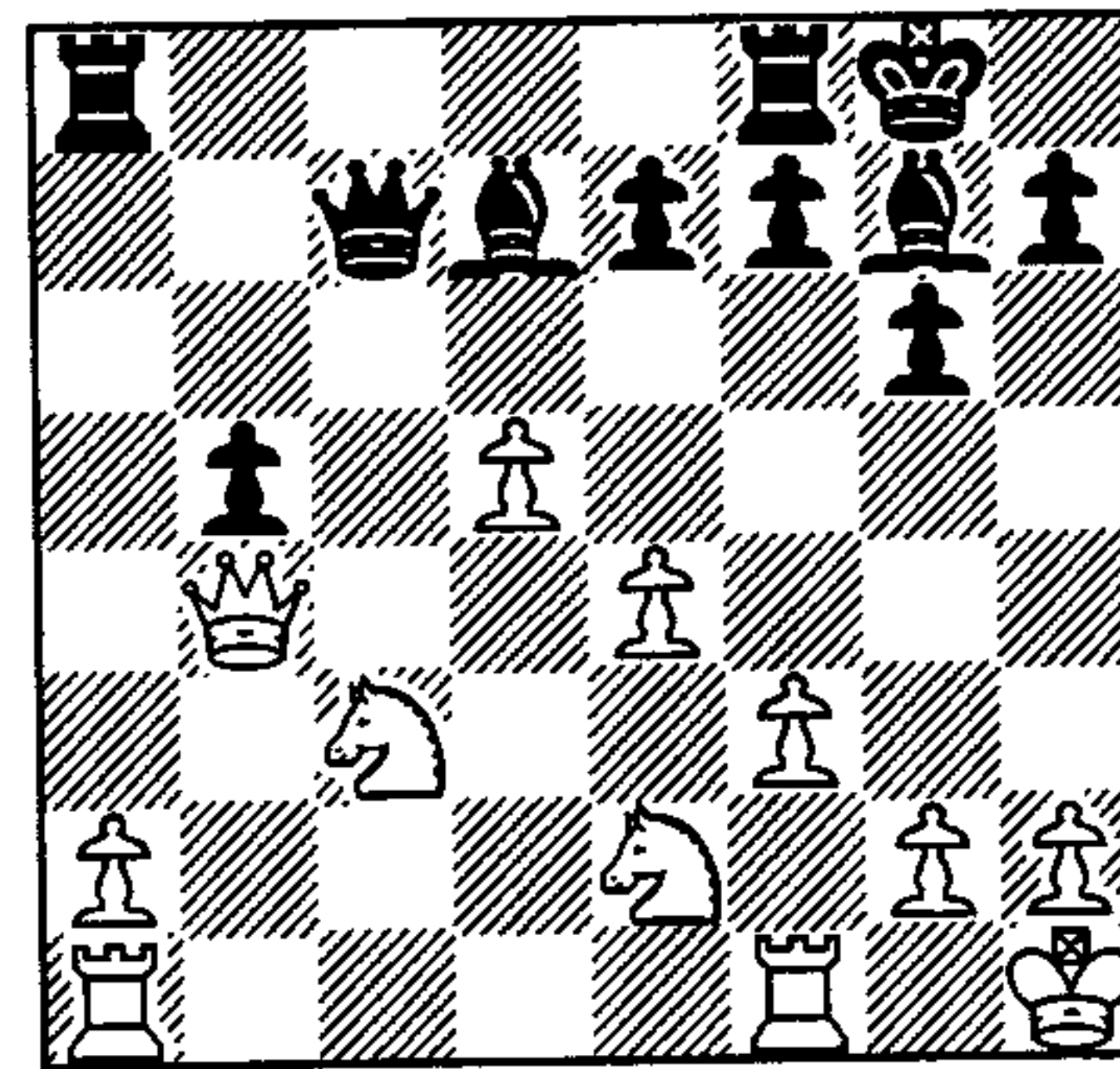
Exercise 15: White to move



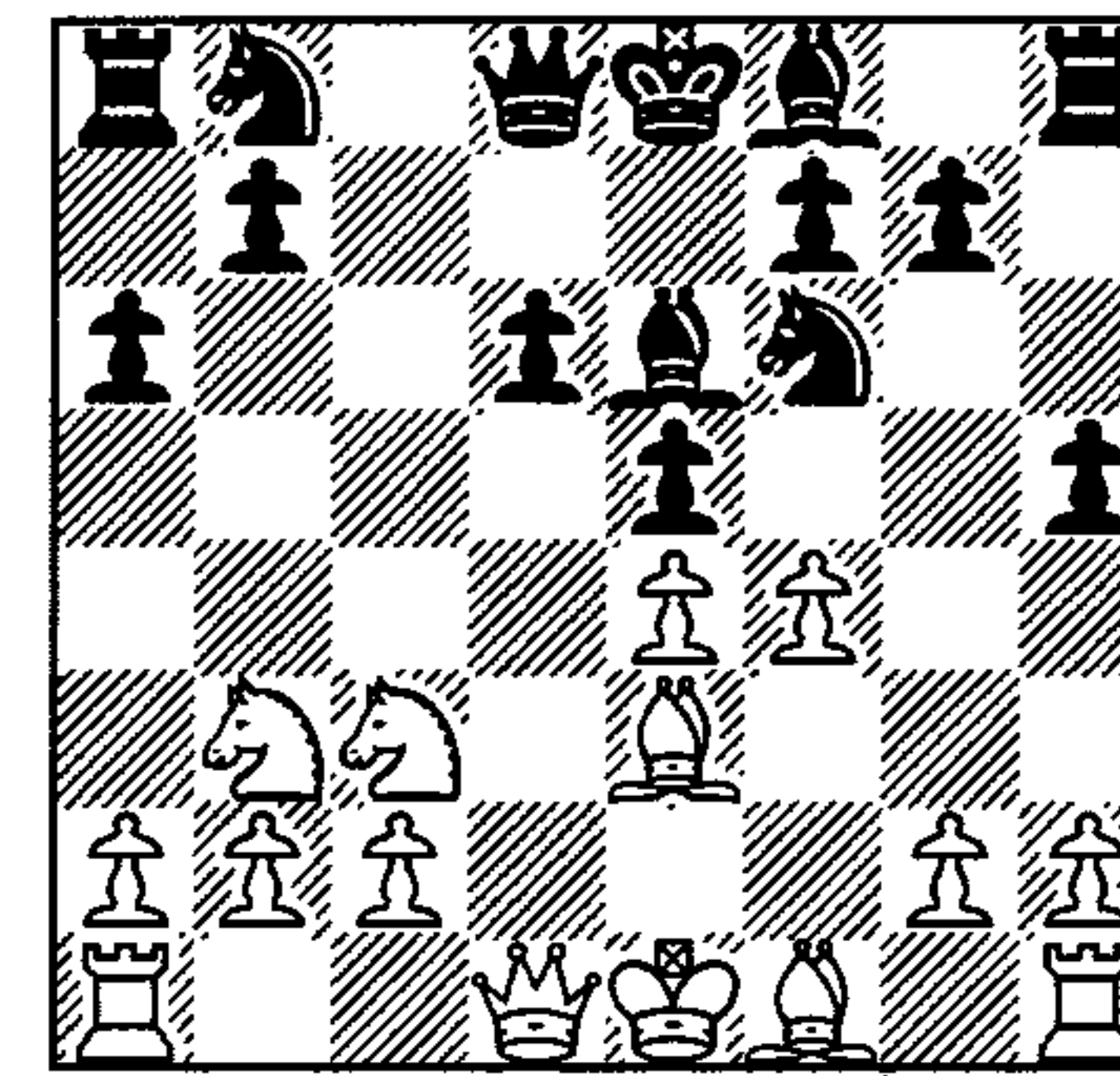
Exercise 18: White to move



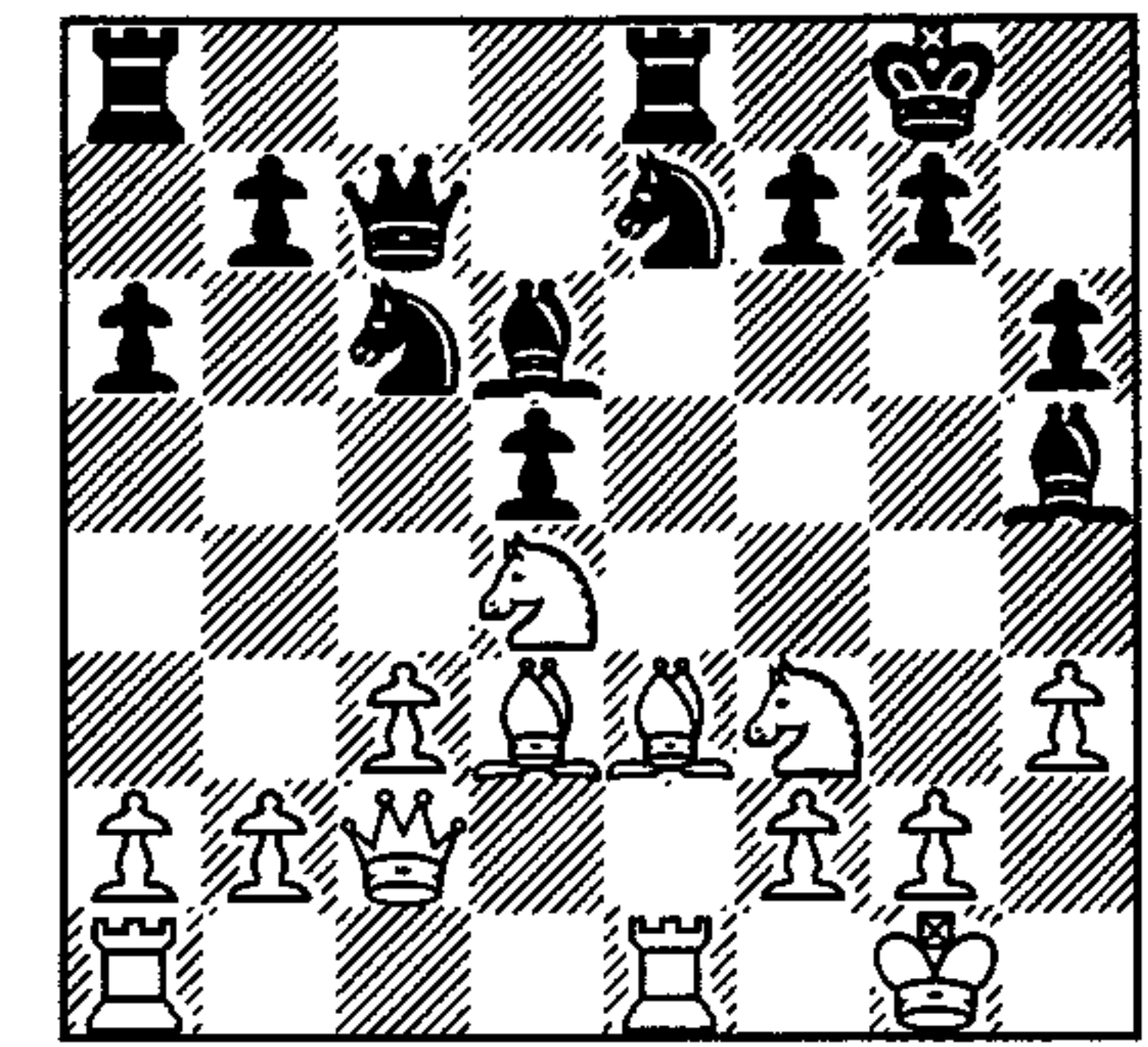
Exercise 19: White to move



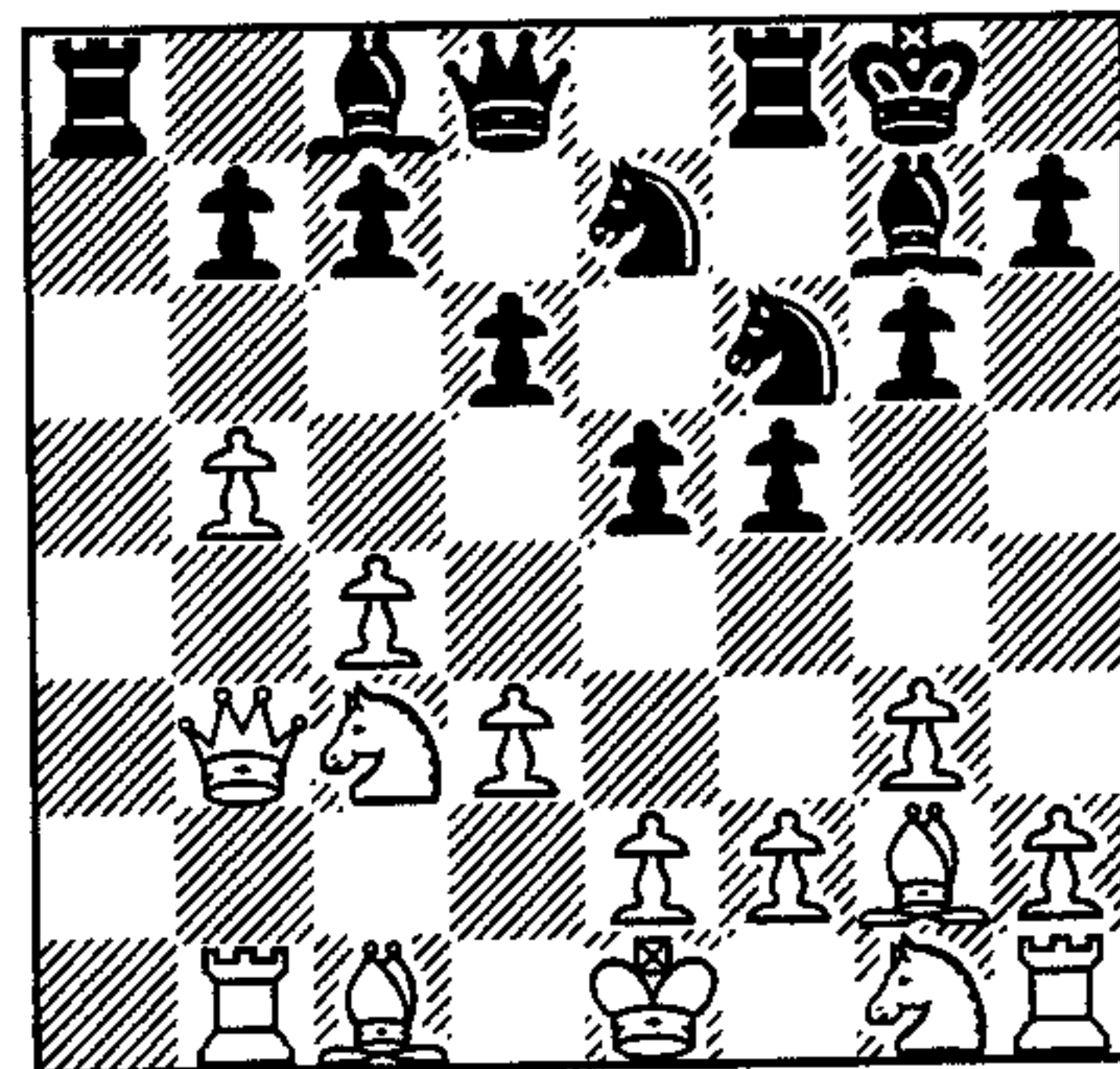
Exercise 22: Black to move



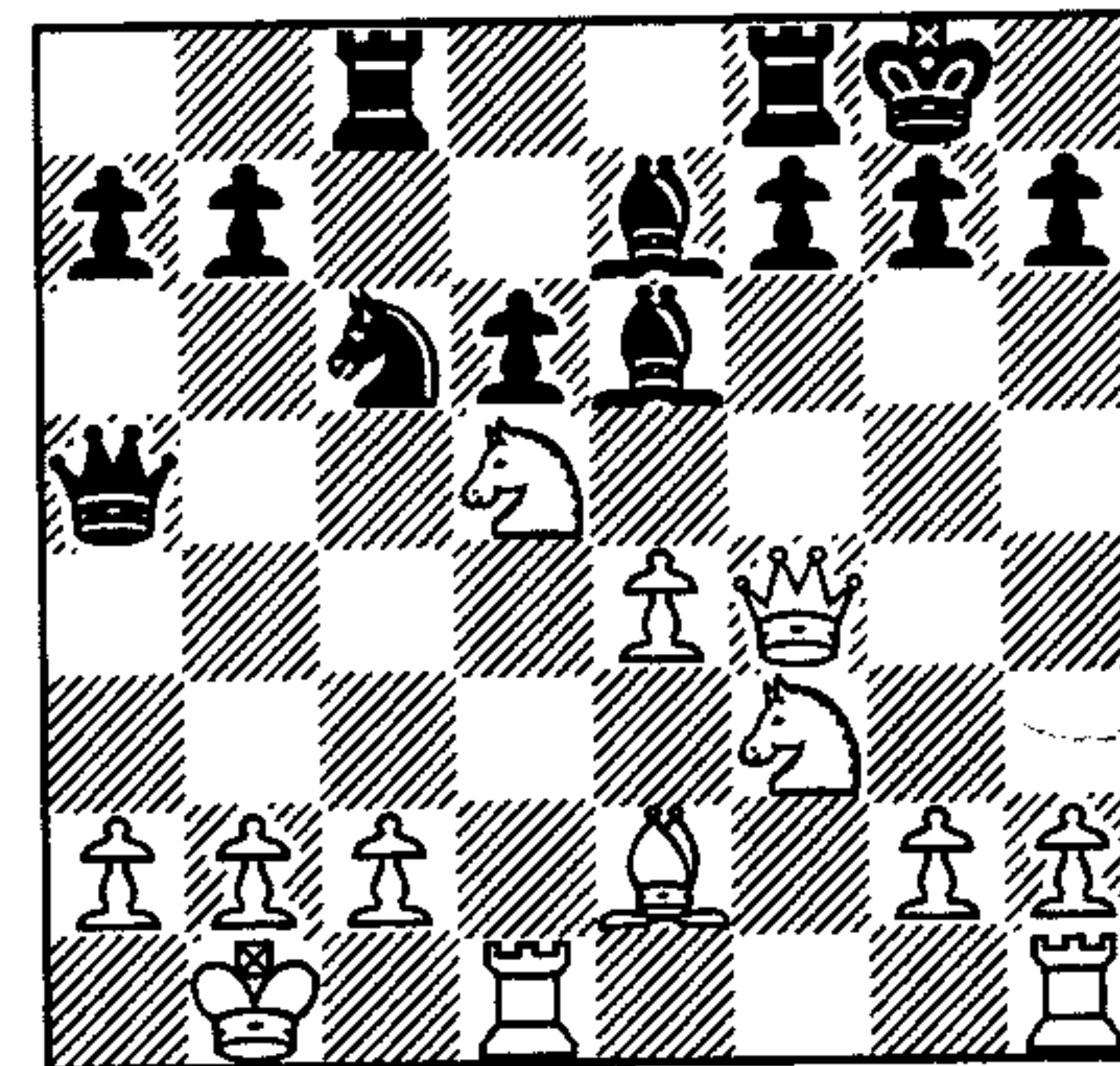
Exercise 25: Black to move



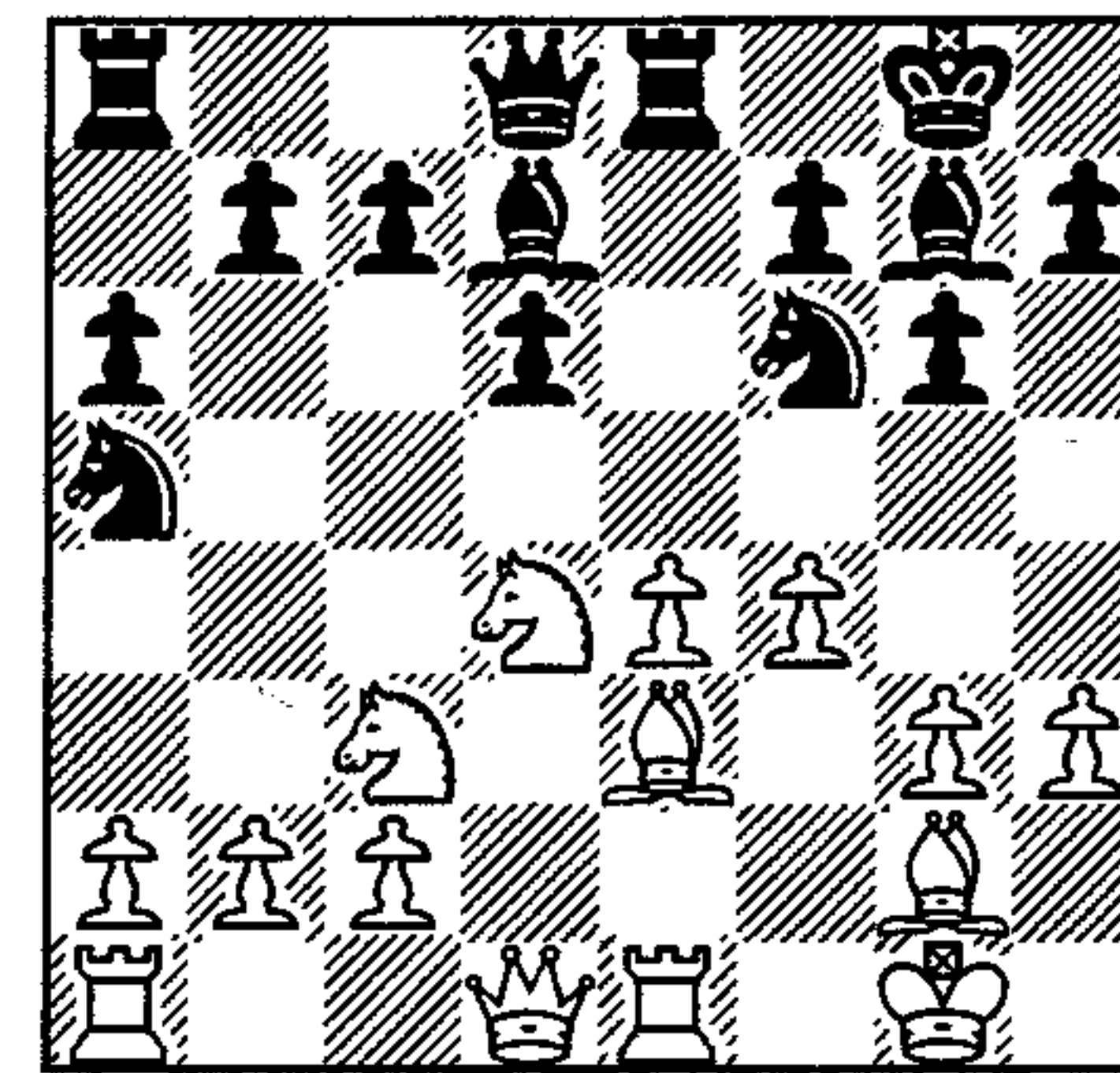
Exercise 28: White to move



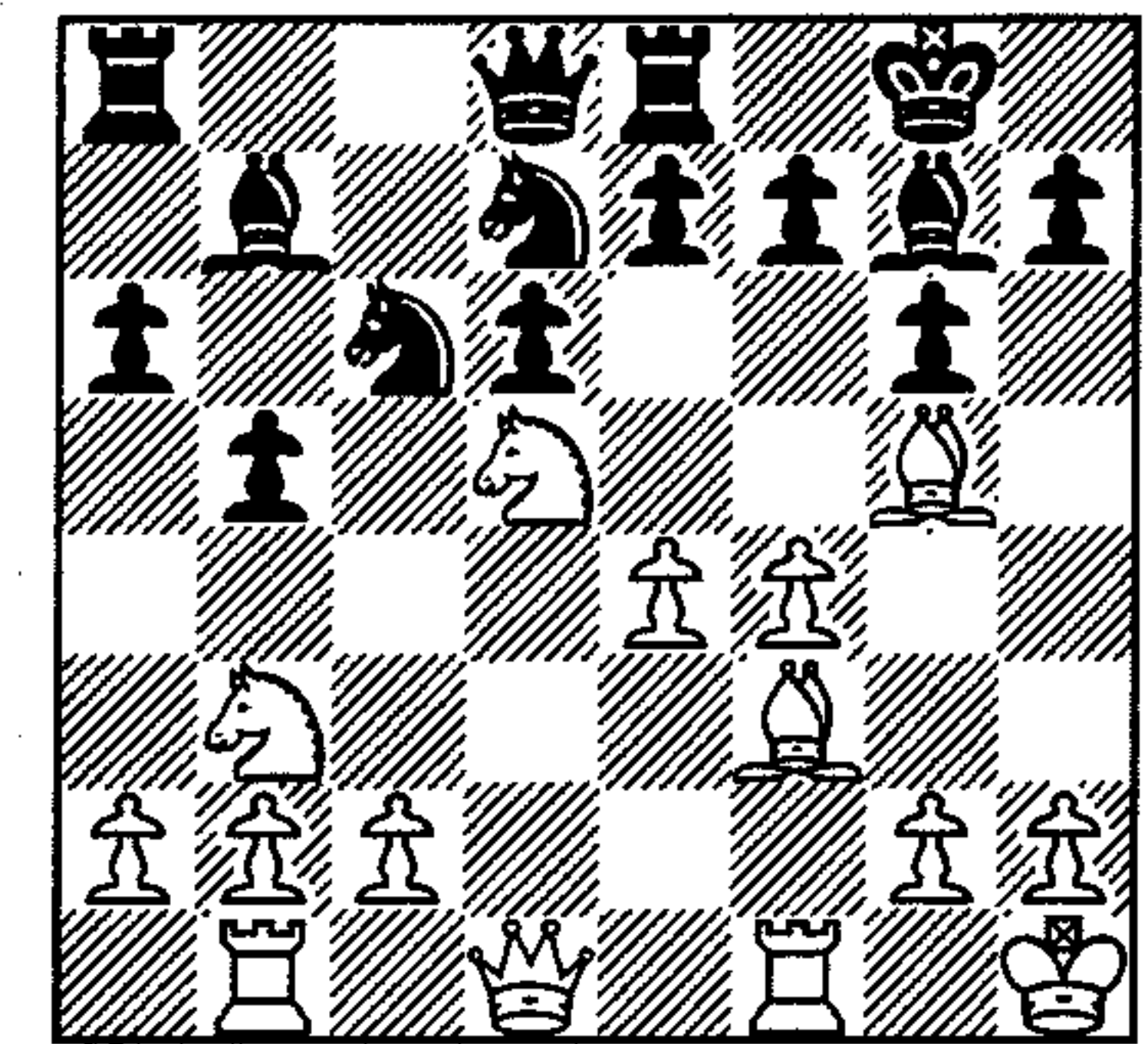
Exercise 20: White to move



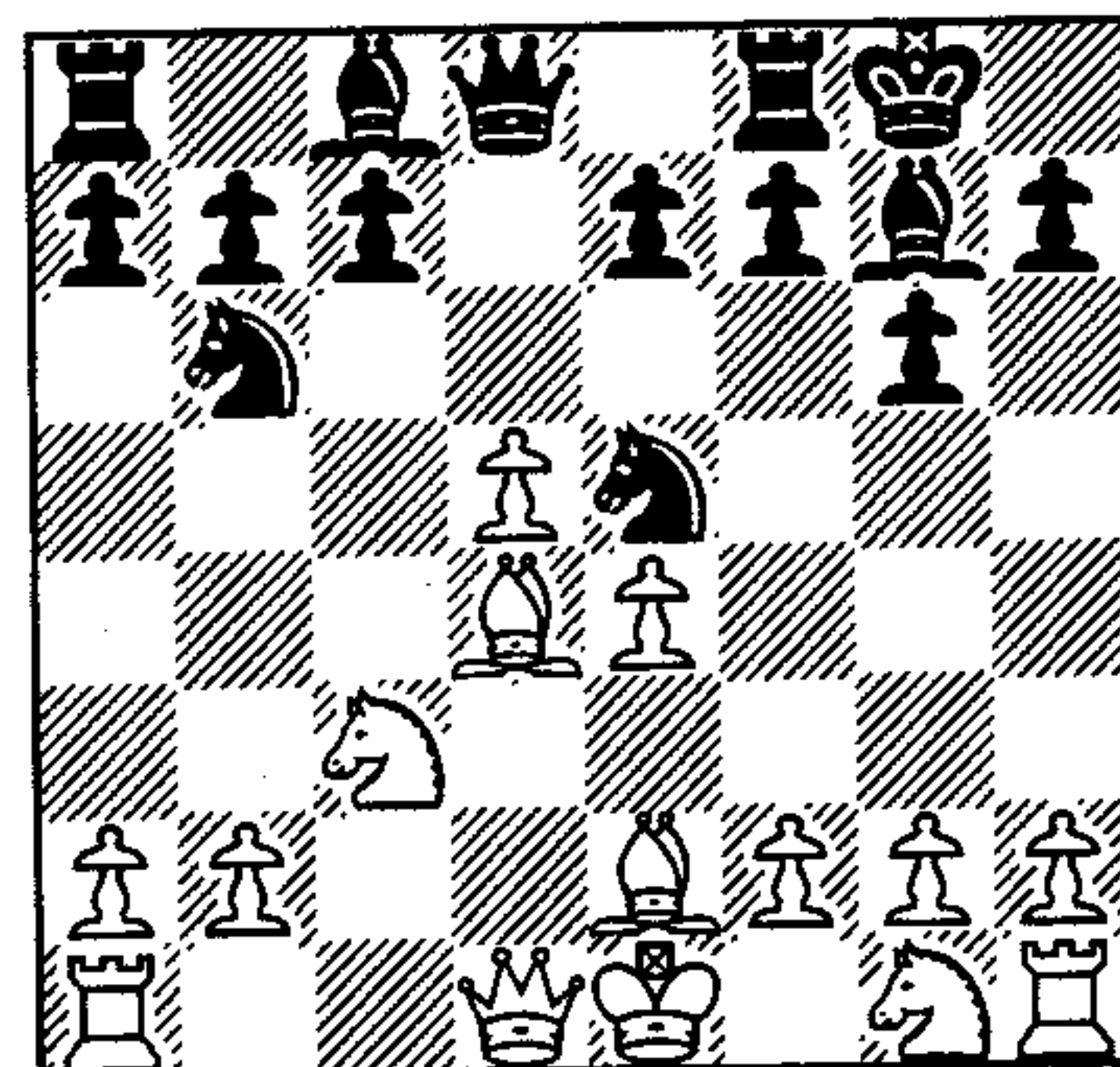
Exercise 23: White to move



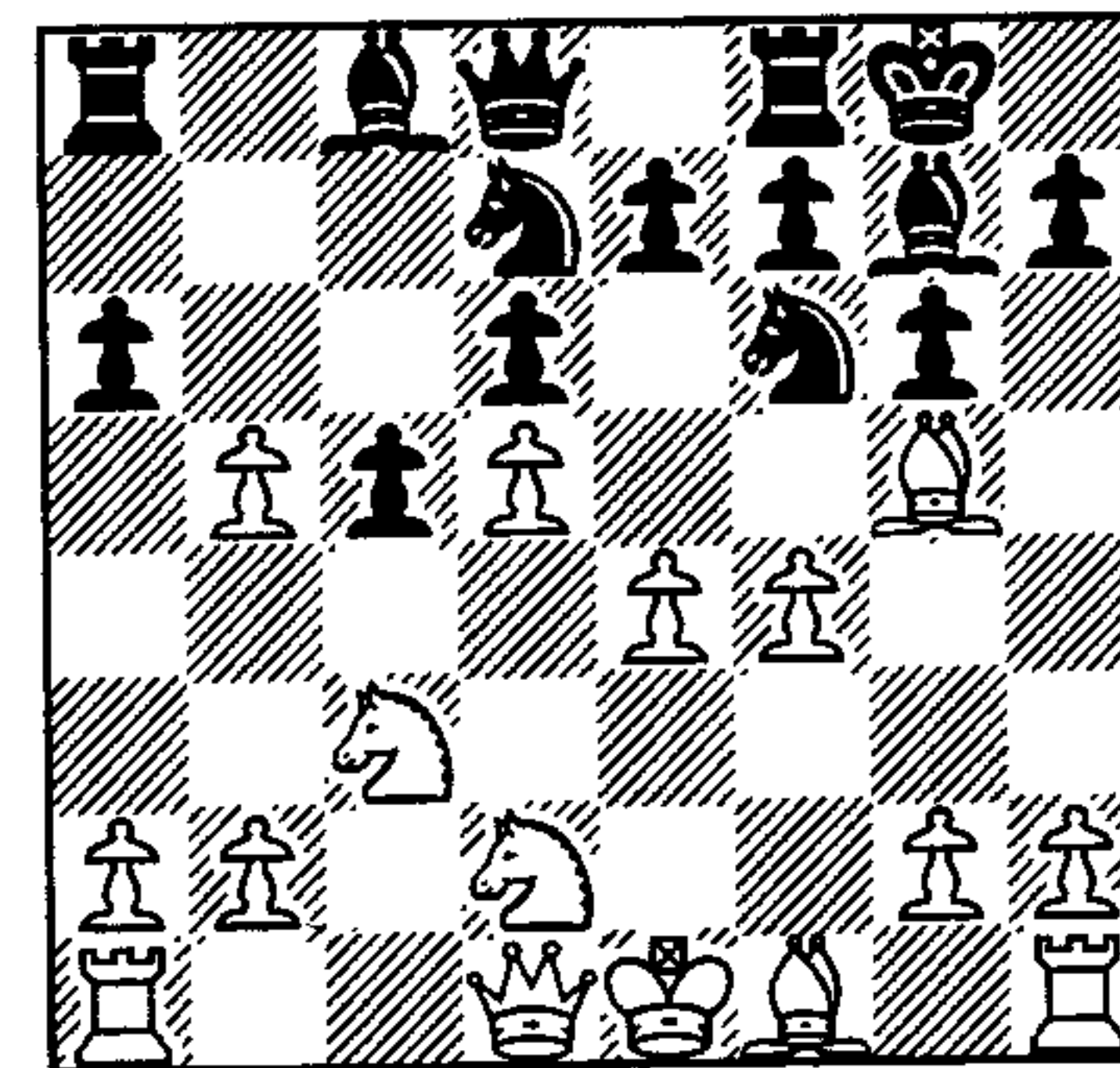
Exercise 26: White to move



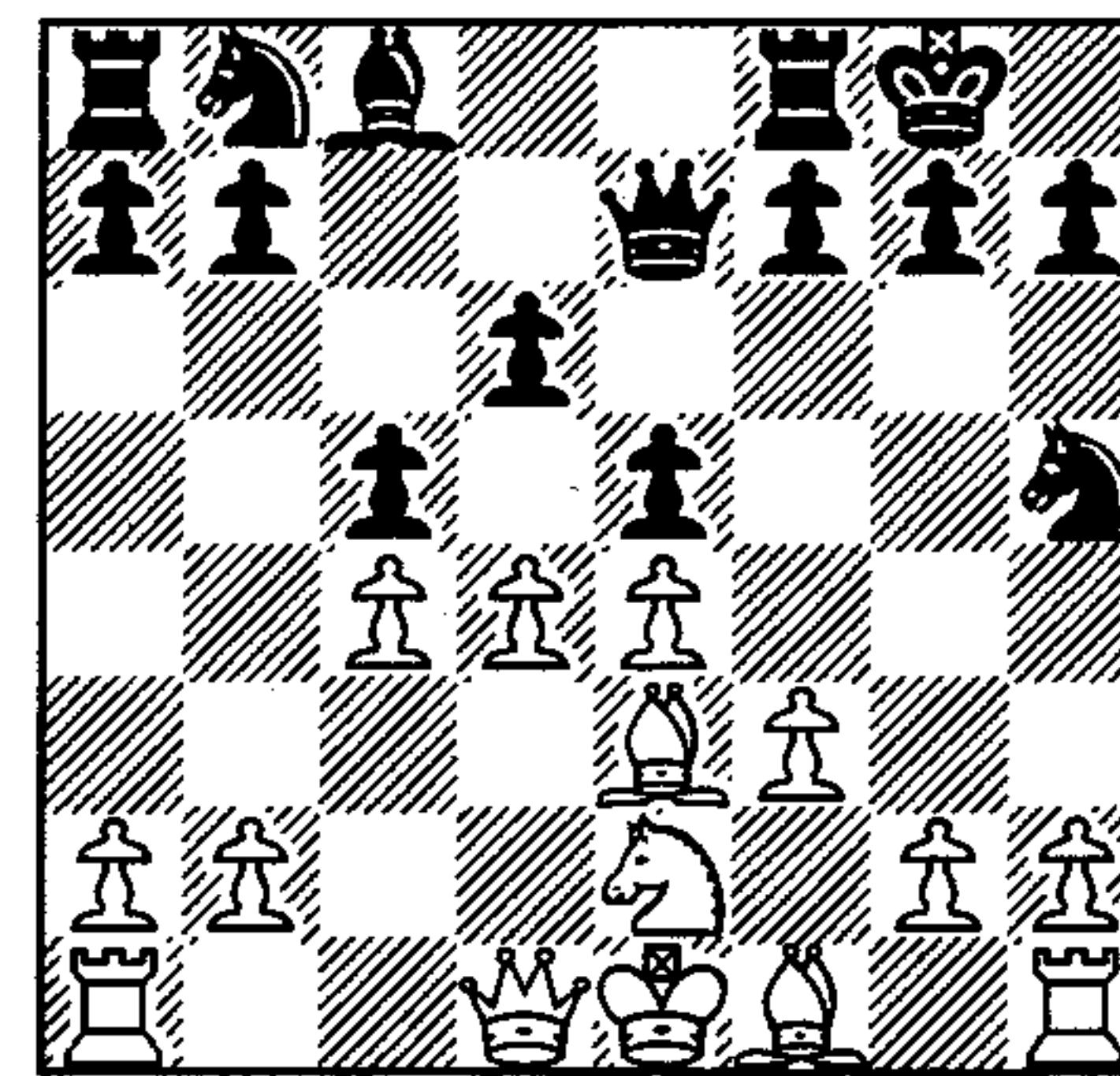
Exercise 29: Black to move



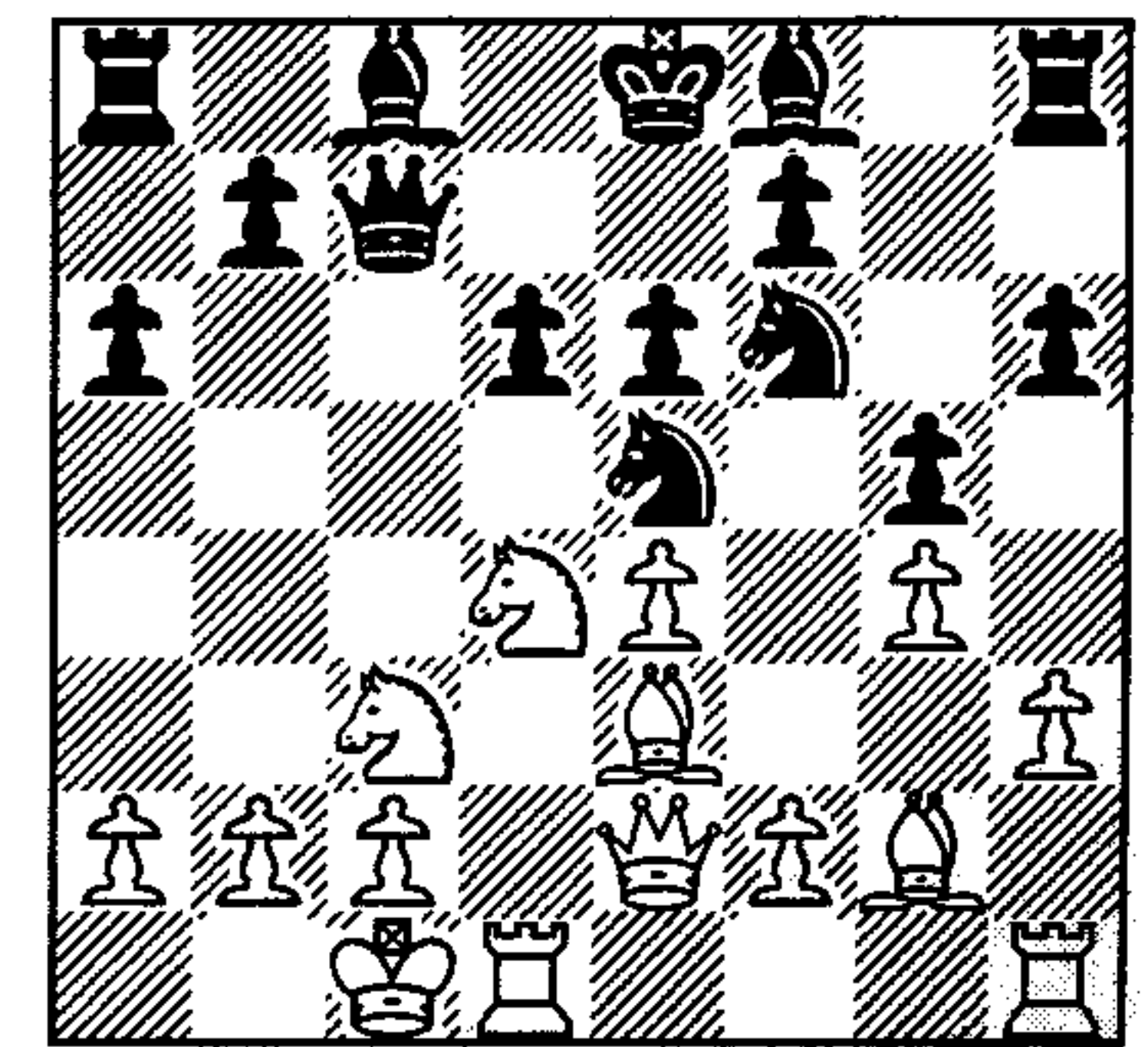
Exercise 21: Black to move



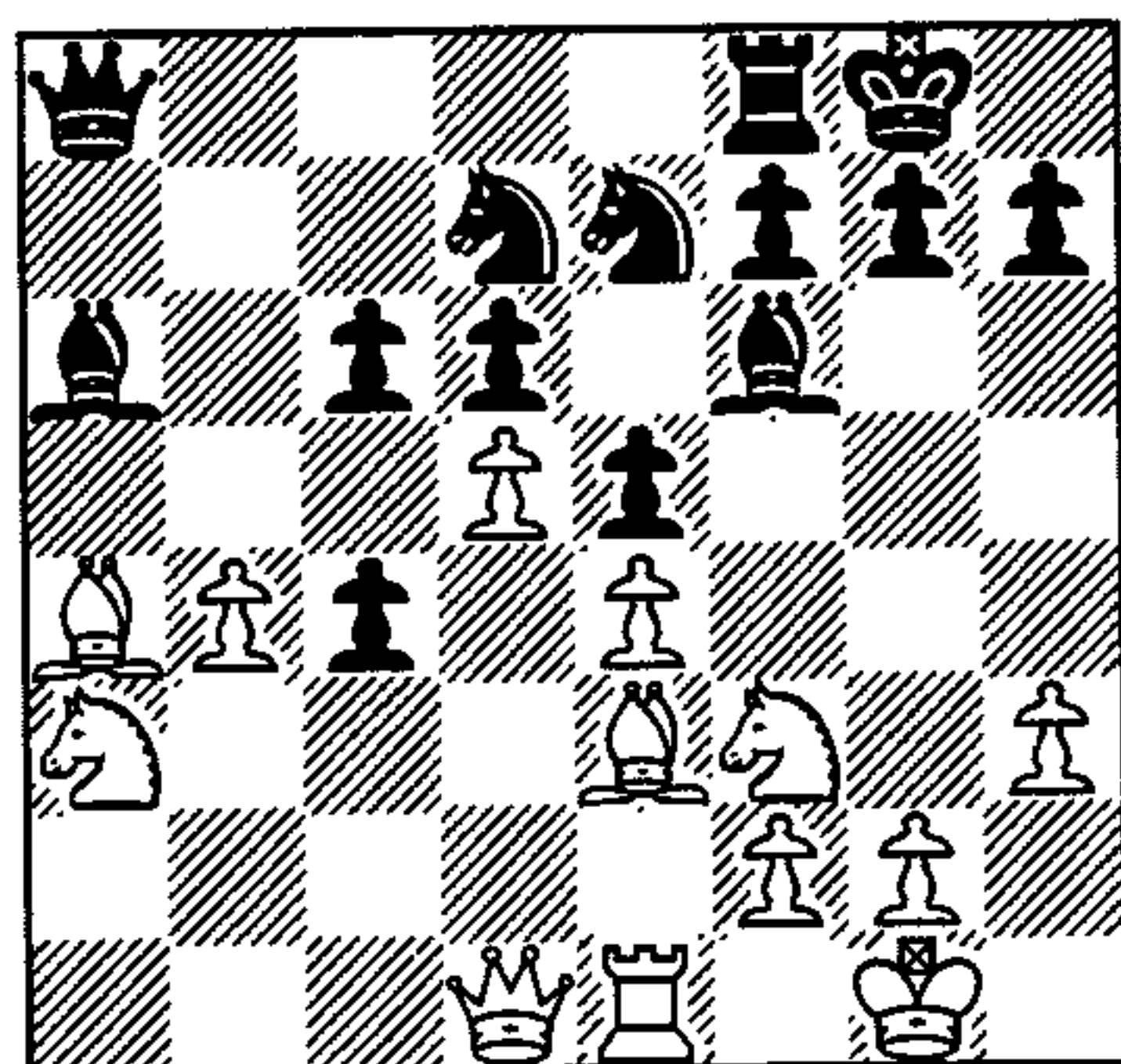
Exercise 24: Black to move



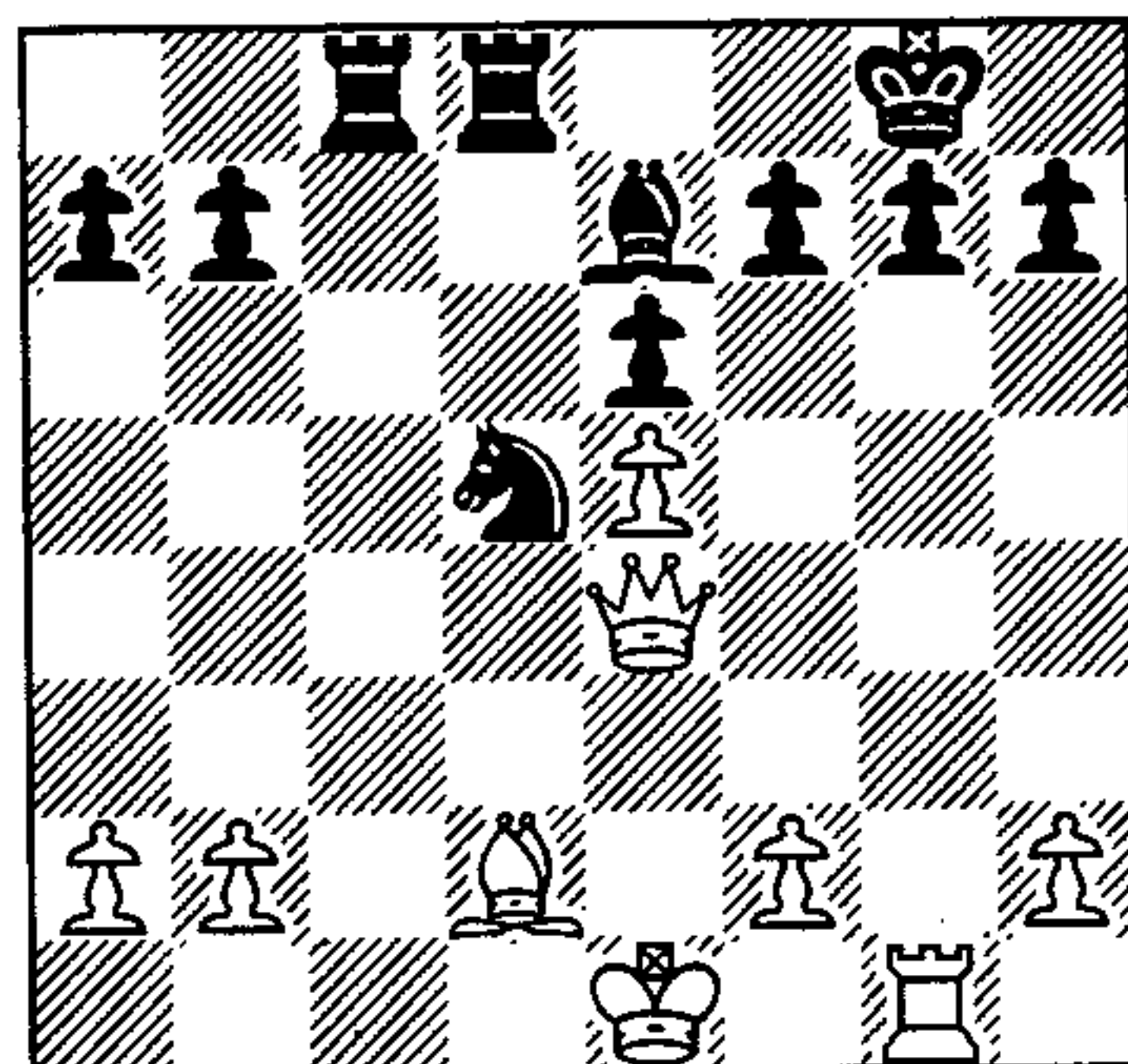
Exercise 27: White to move



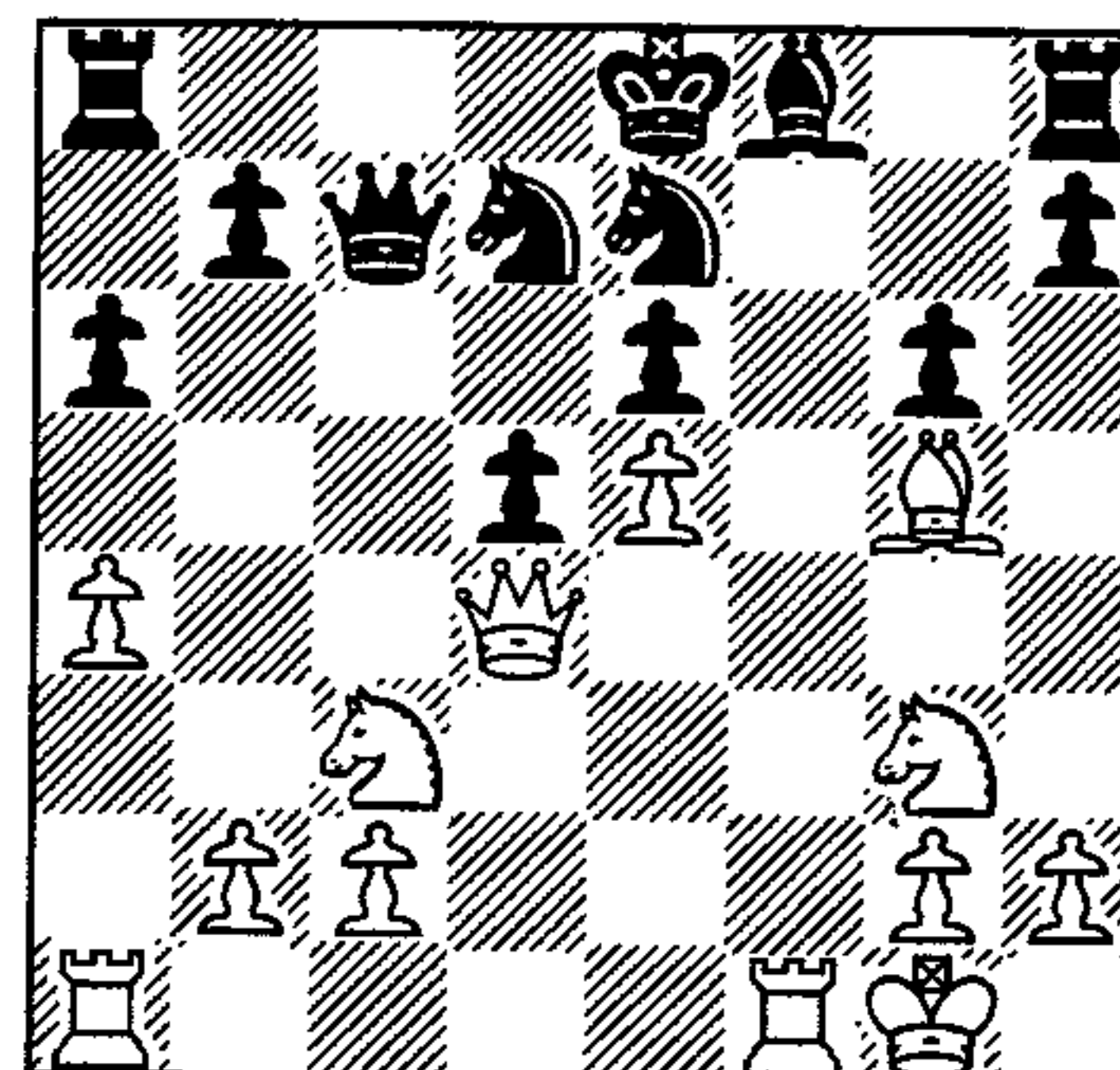
Exercise 30: White to move



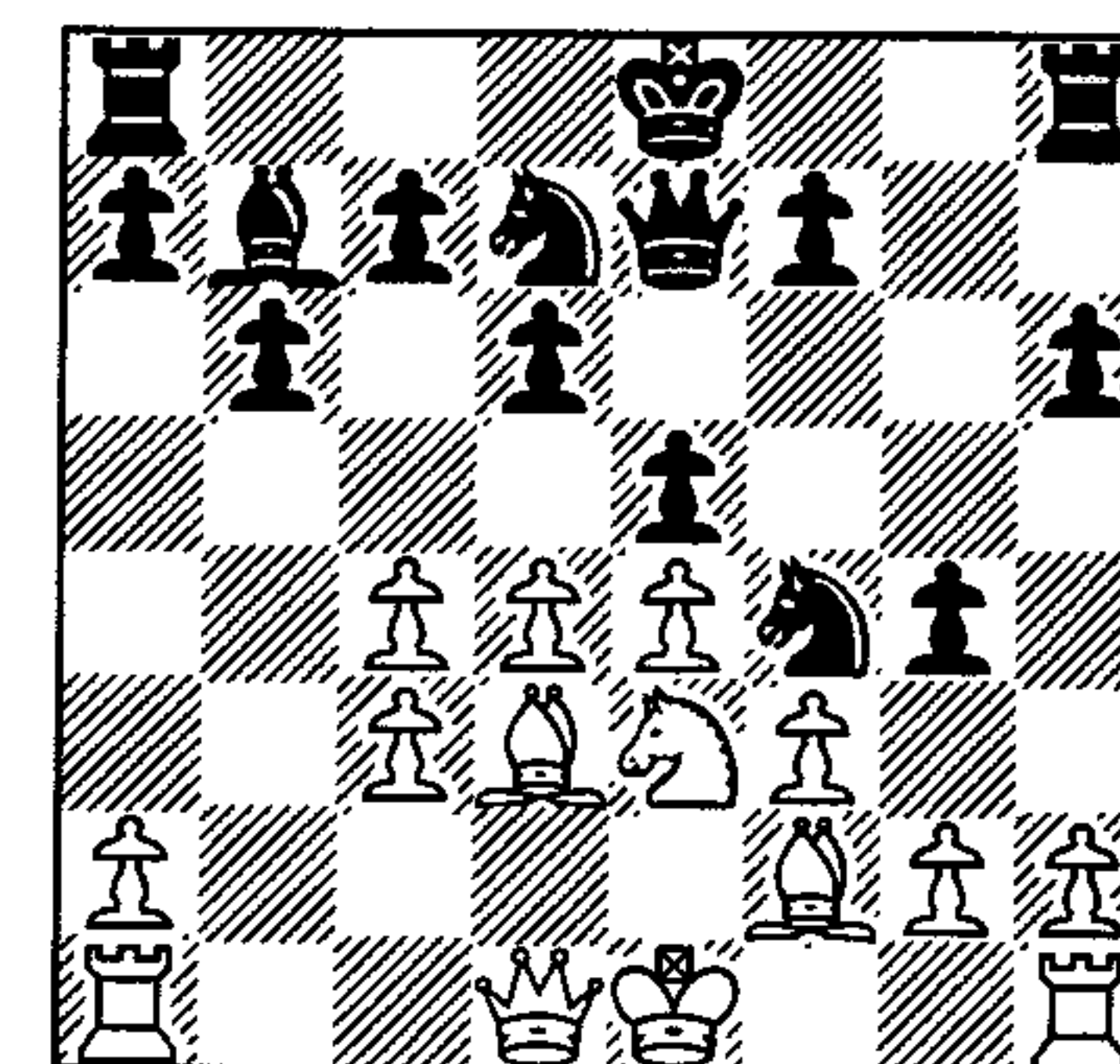
Exercise 31: Black to move



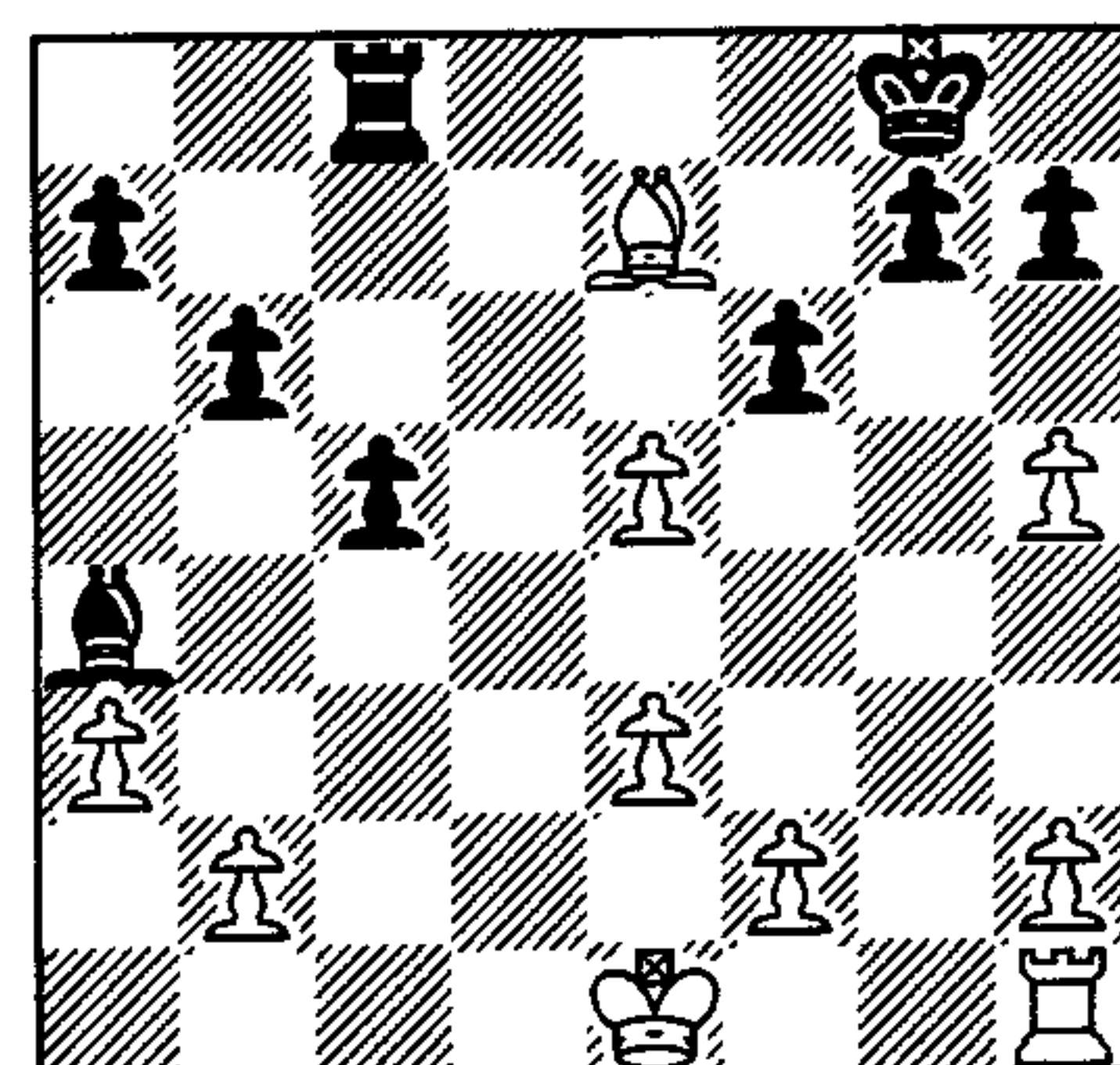
Exercise 34: Black to move



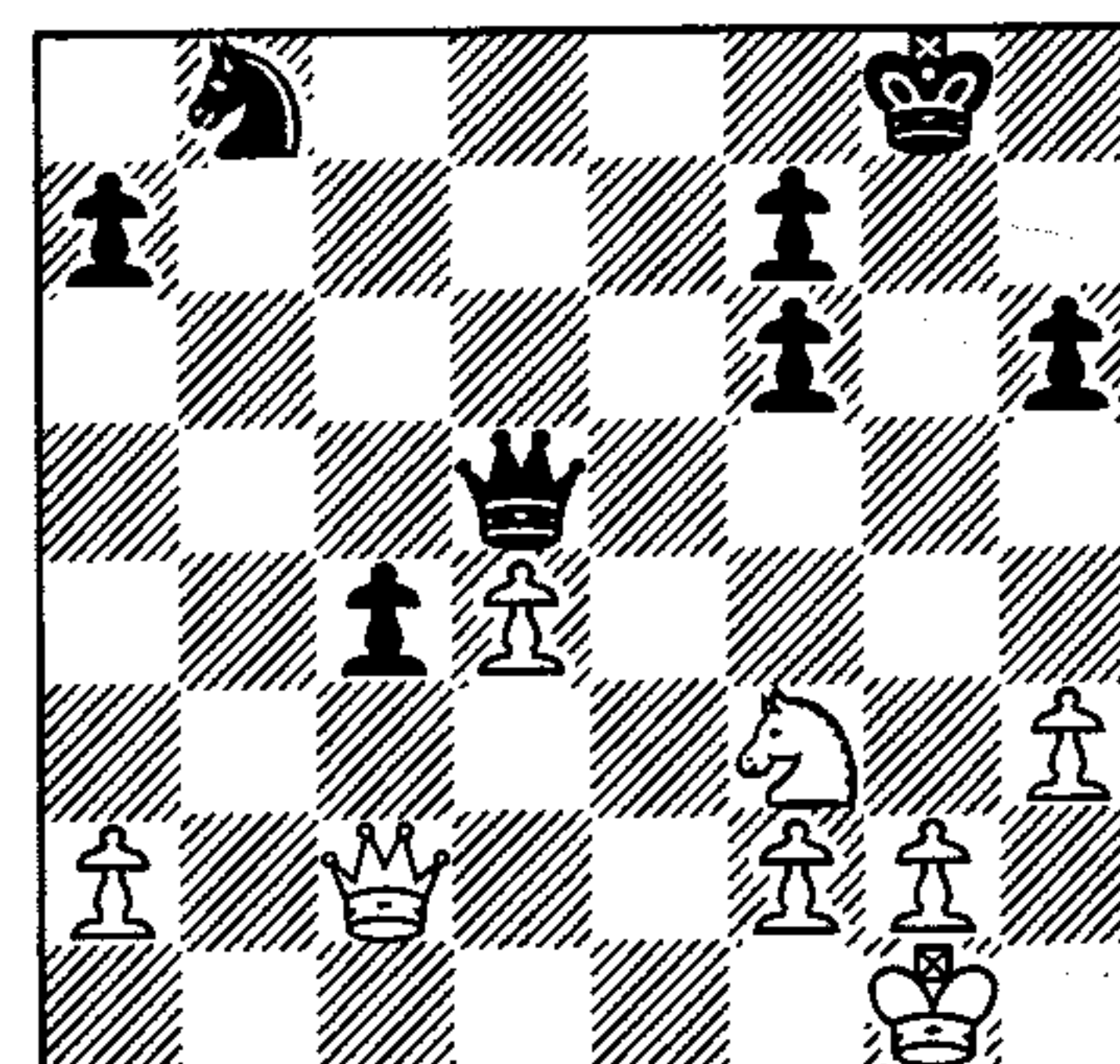
Exercise 37: Black to move



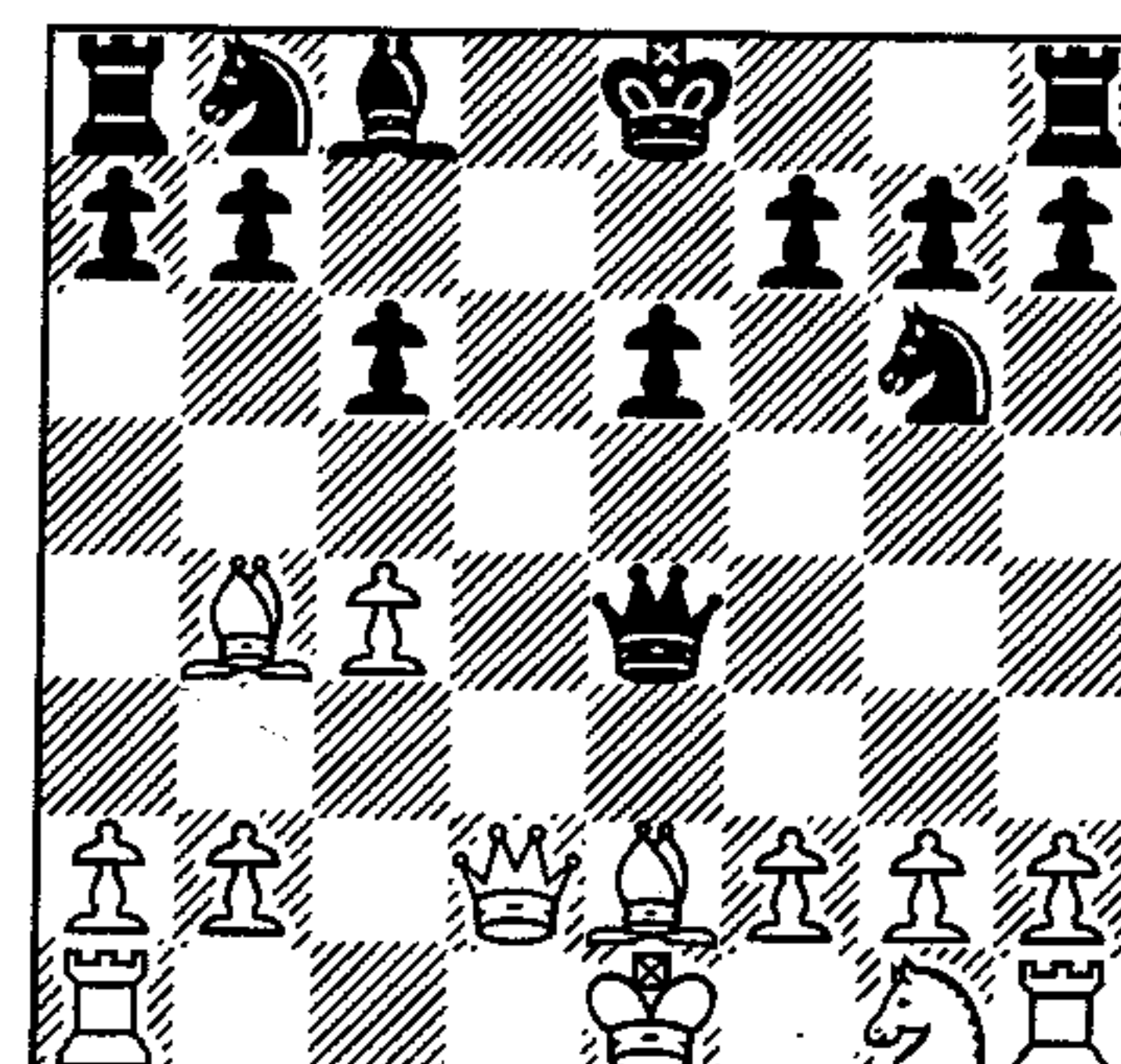
Exercise 40: White to move



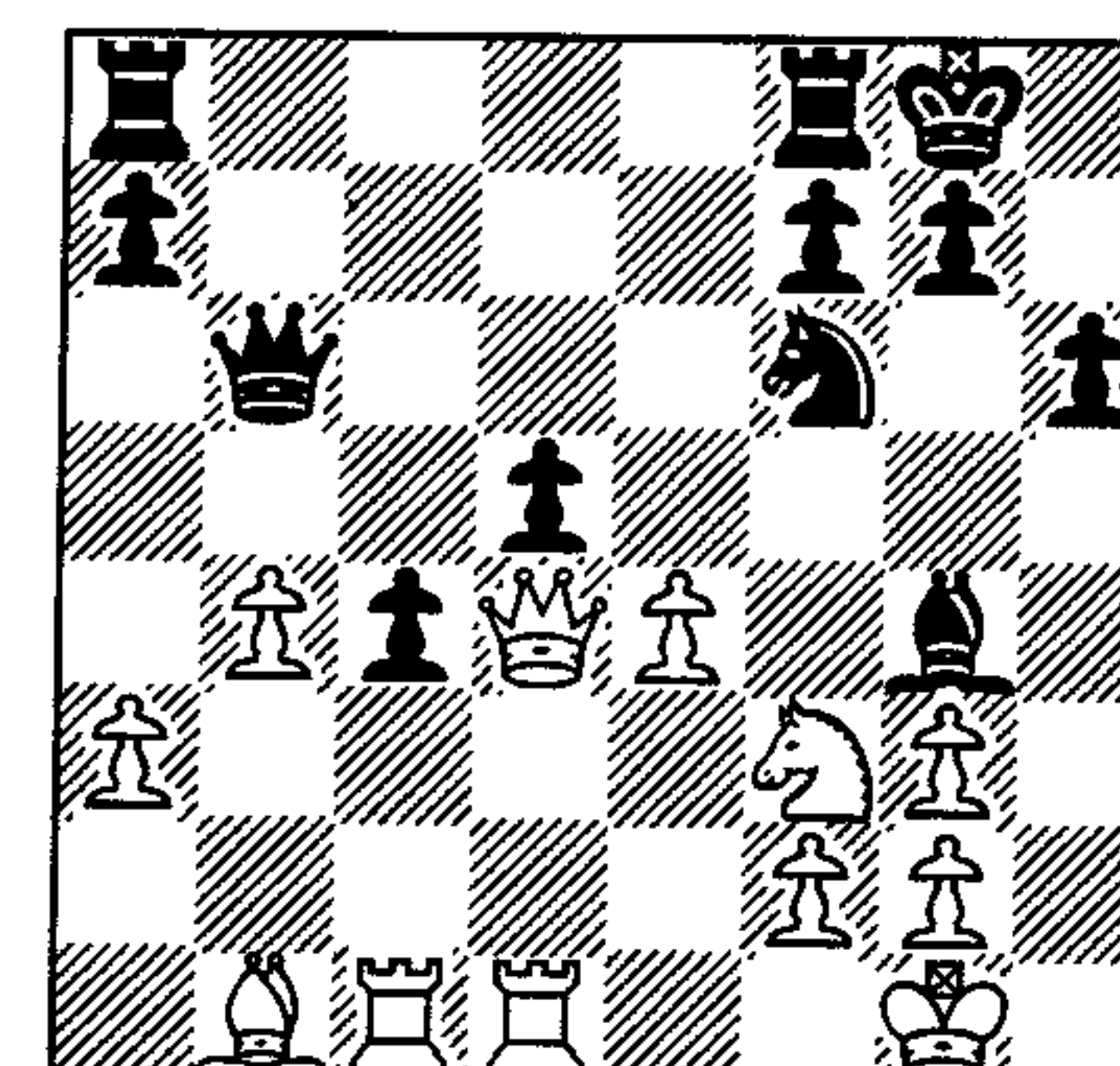
Exercise 32: White to move



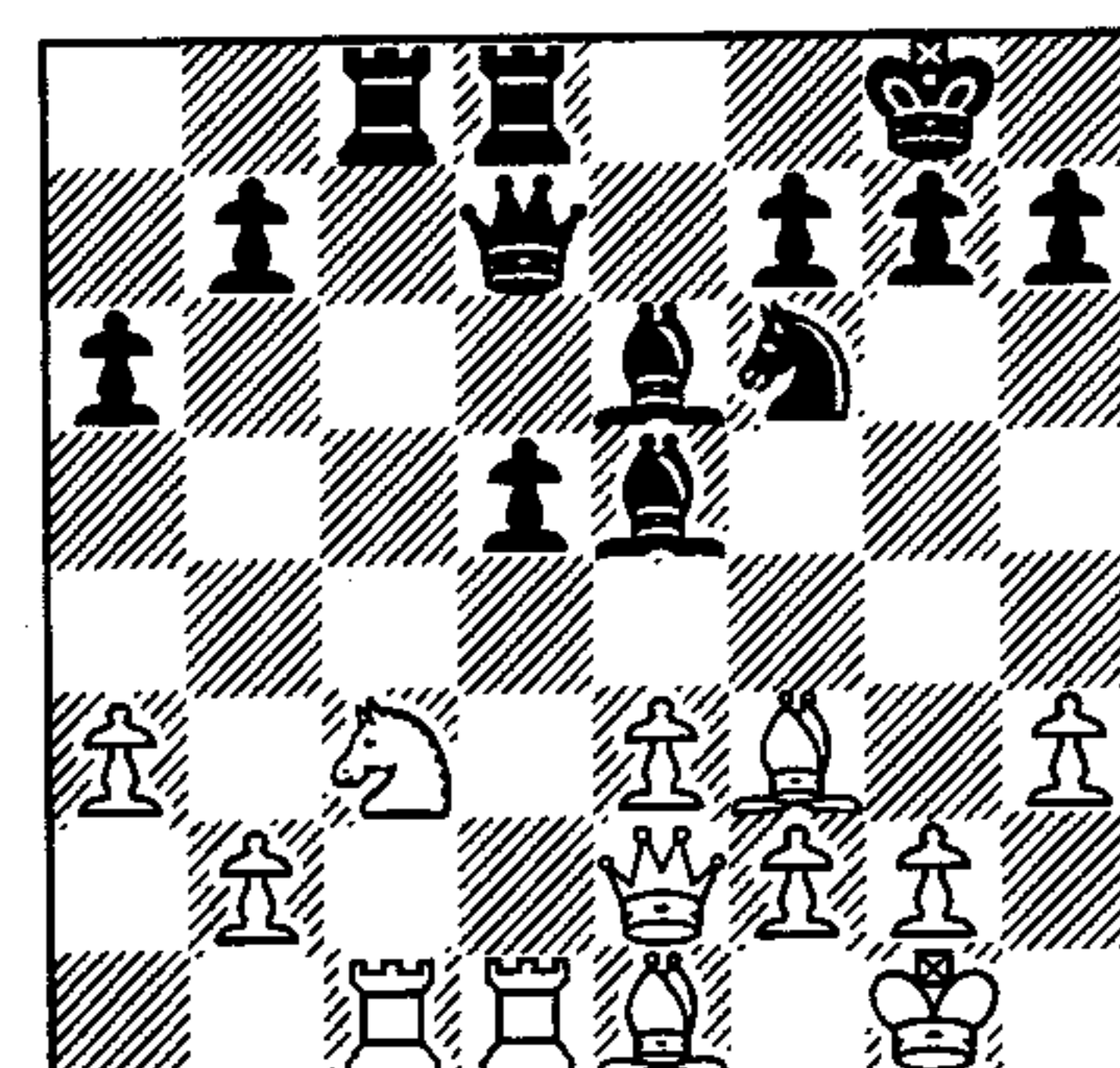
Exercise 35: White to move



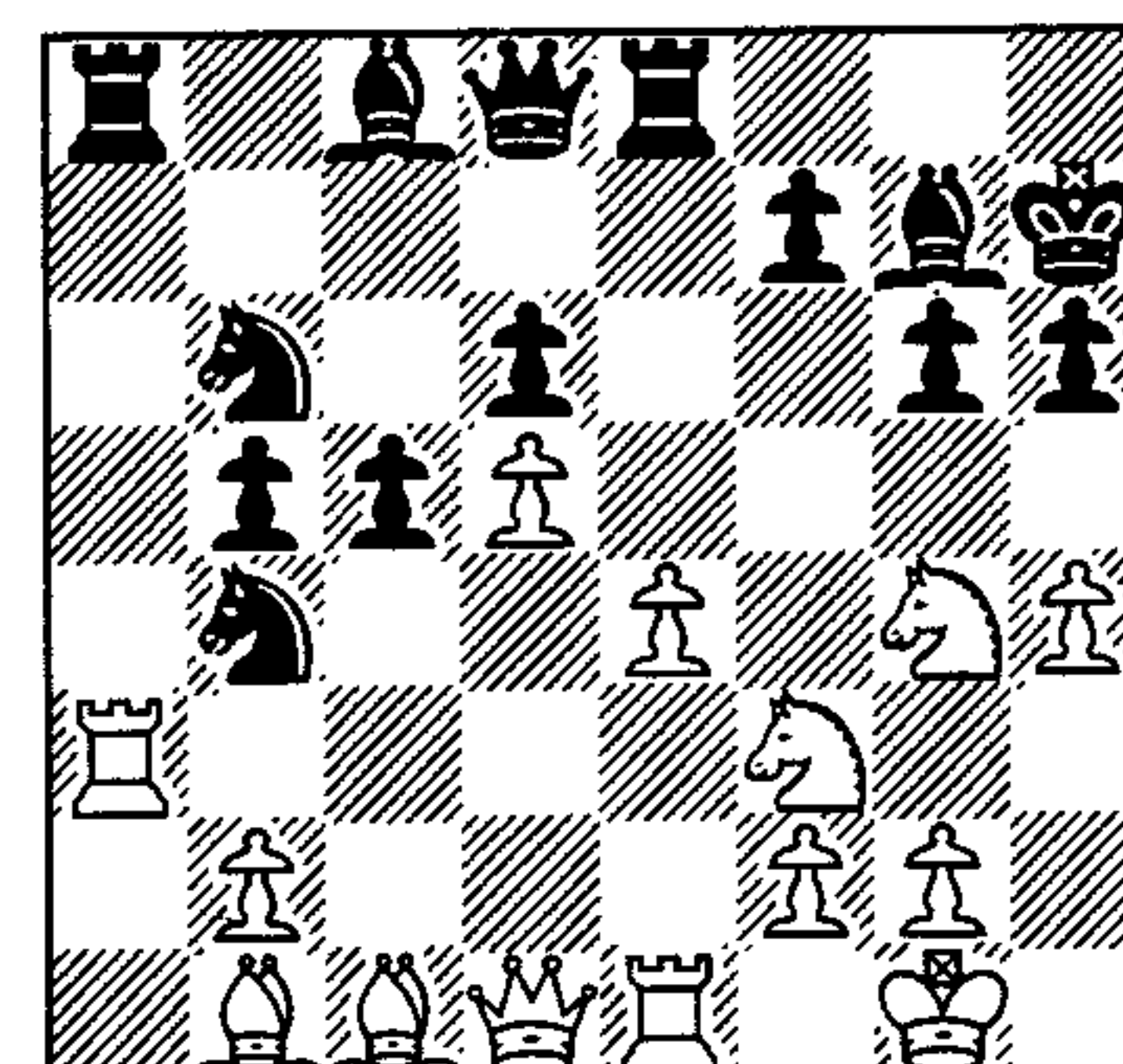
Exercise 38: White to move



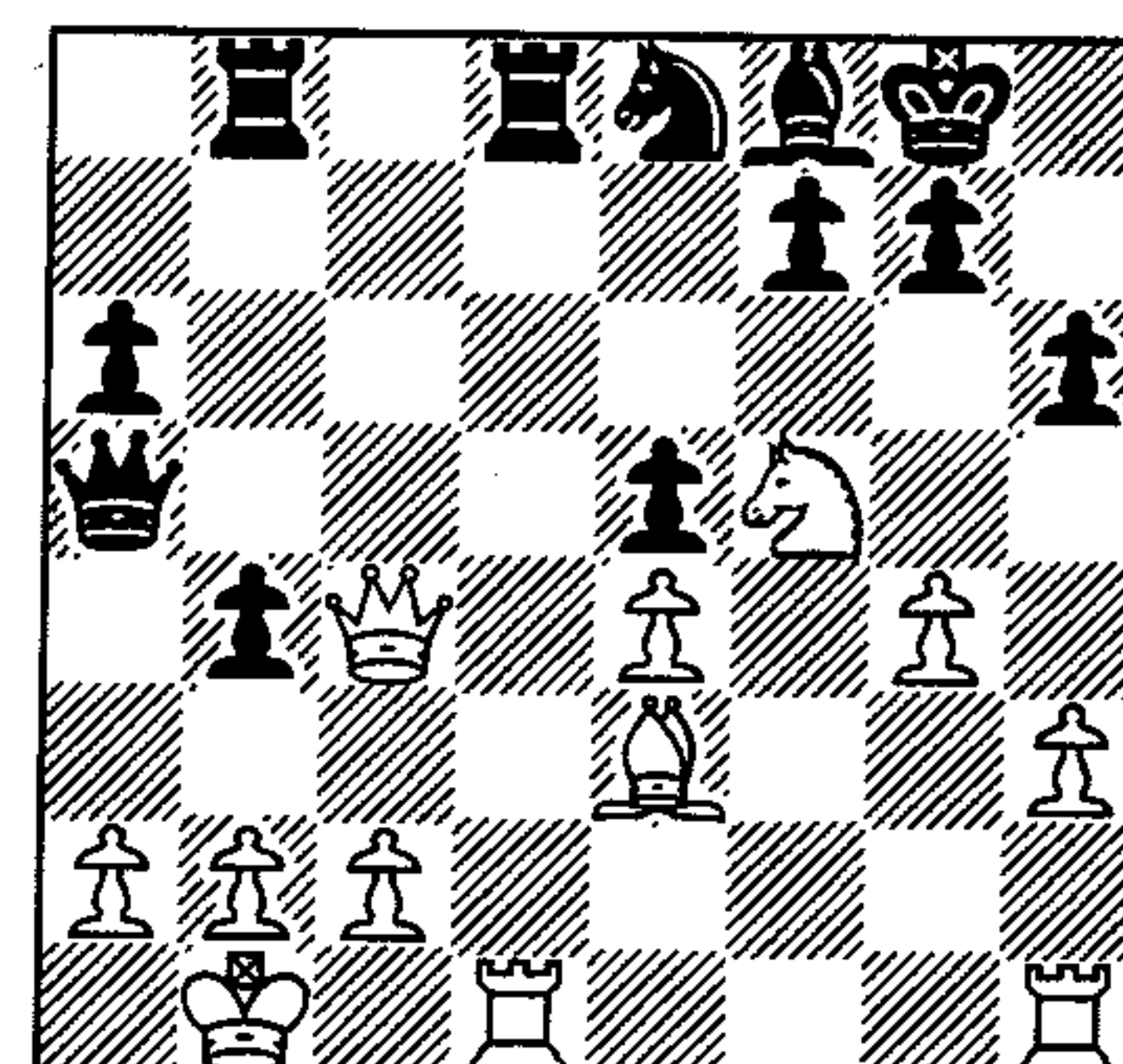
Exercise 41: Black to move



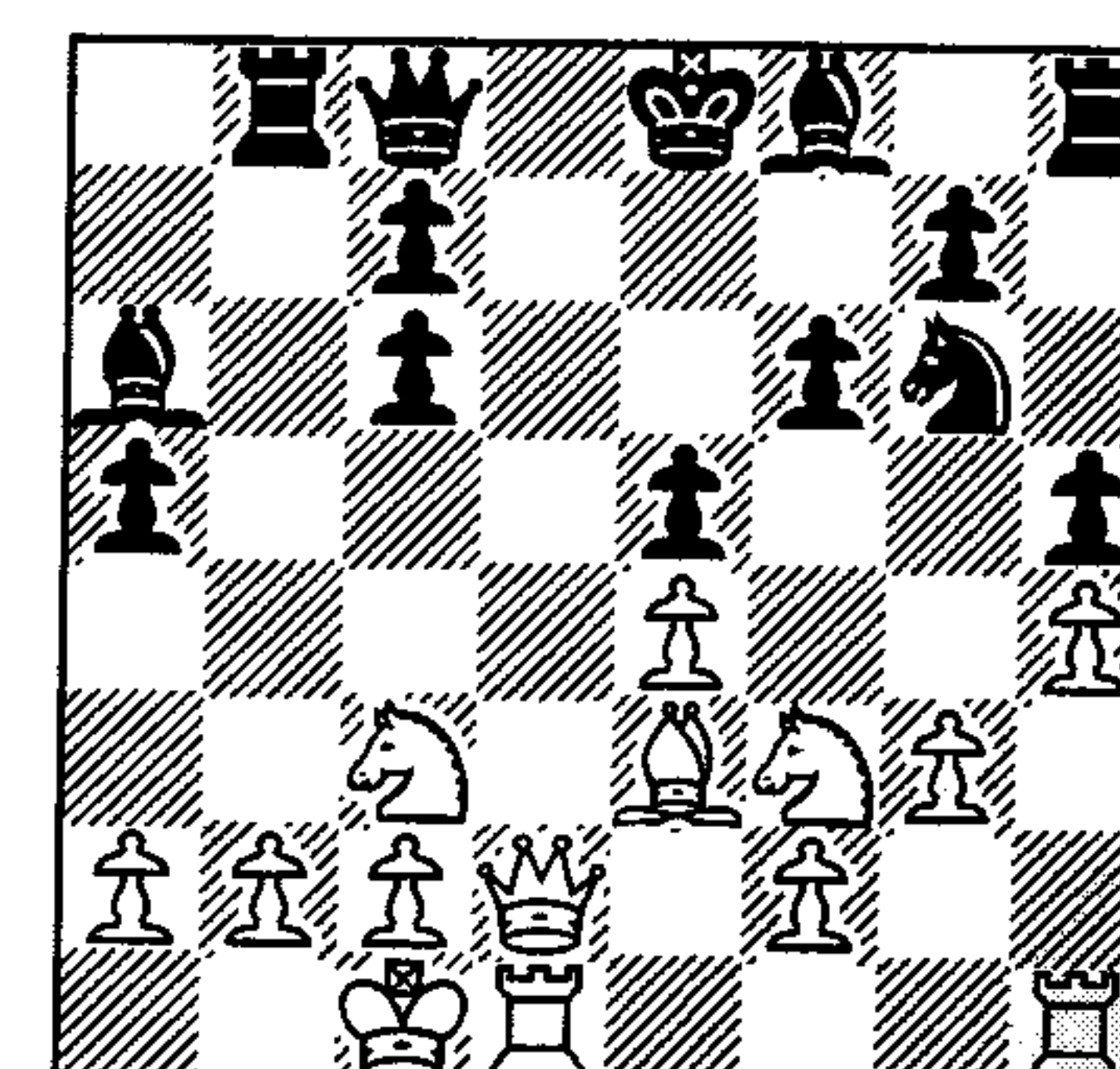
Exercise 33: Black to move



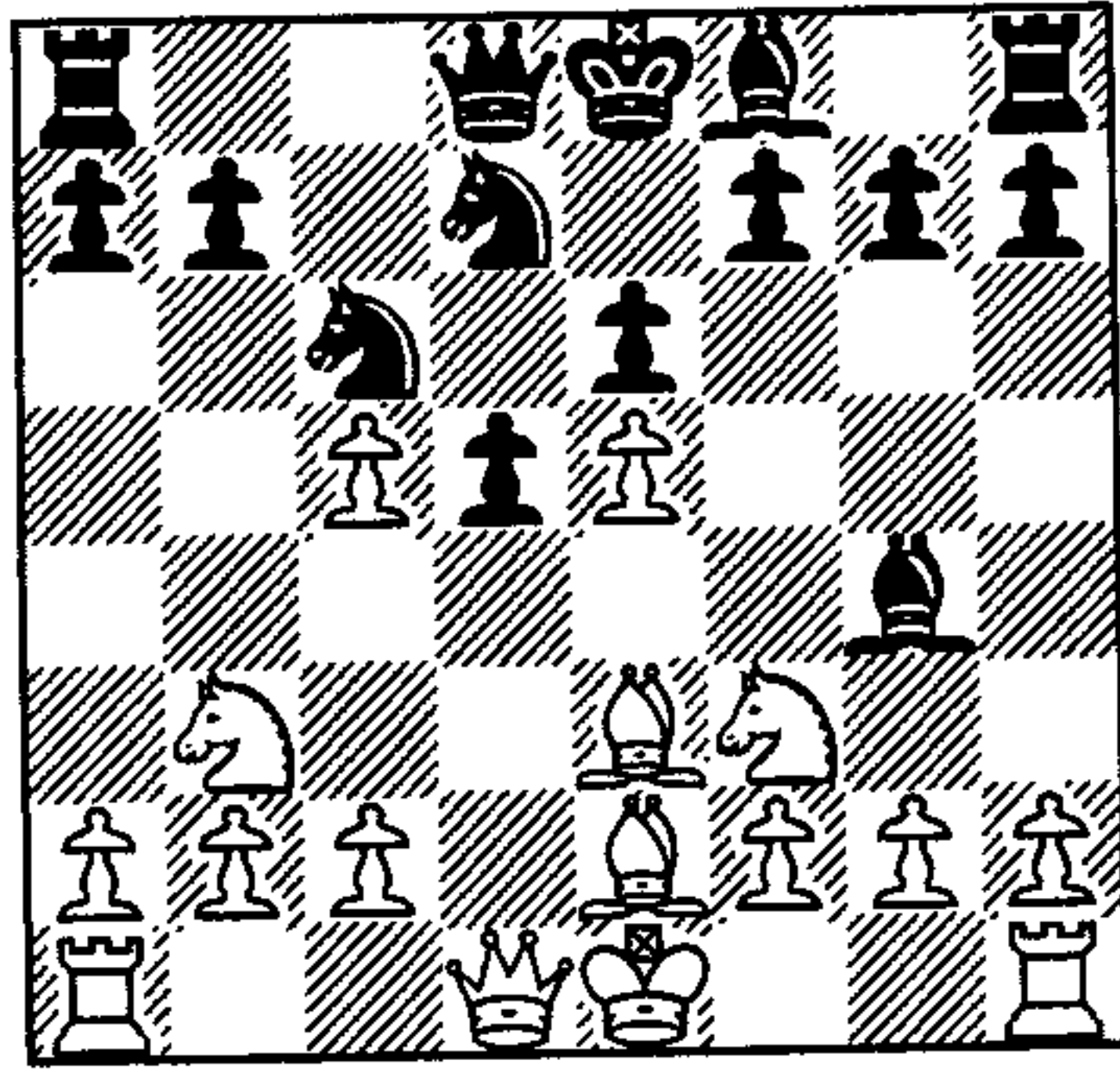
Exercise 36: White to move



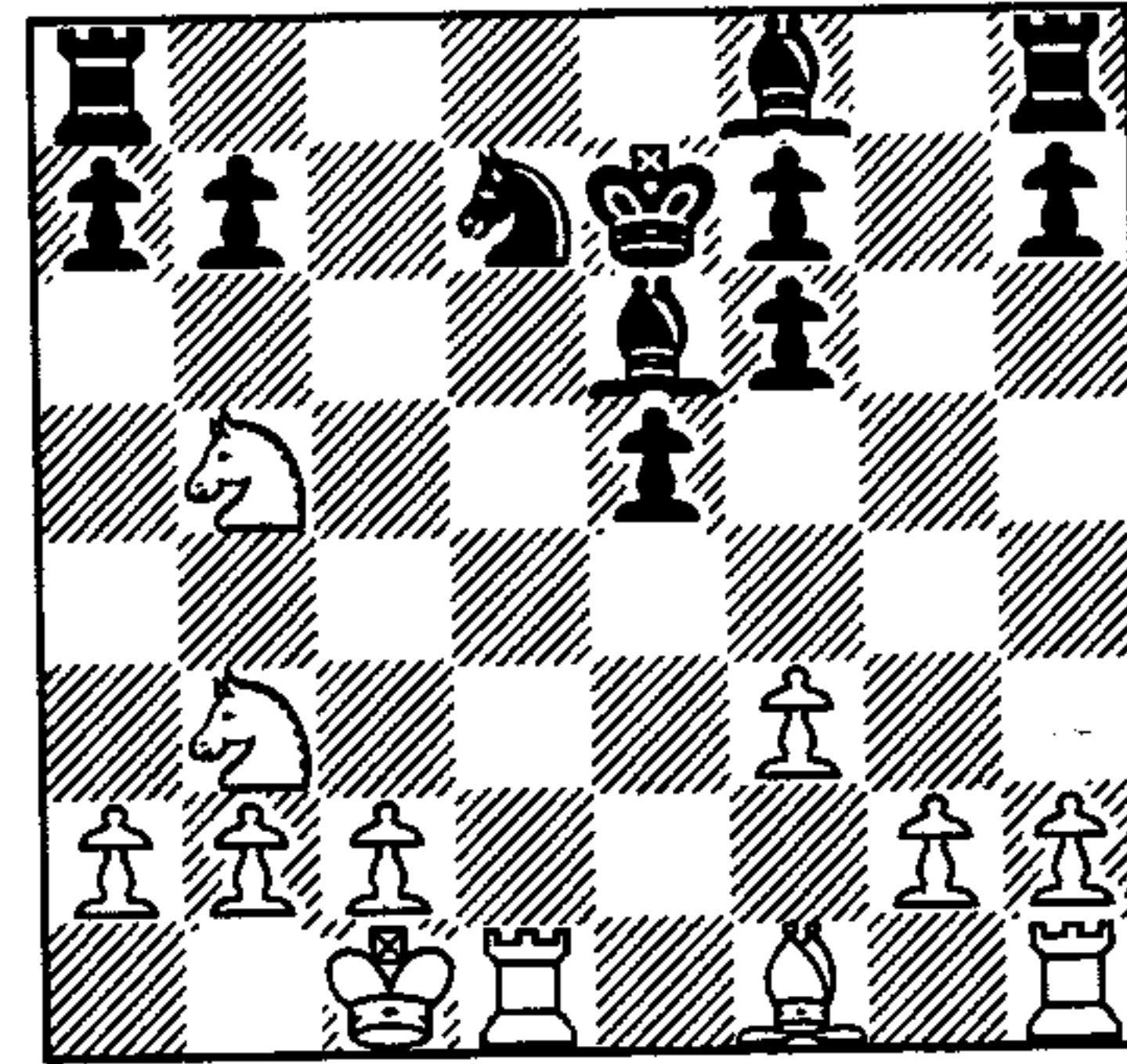
Exercise 39: Black to move



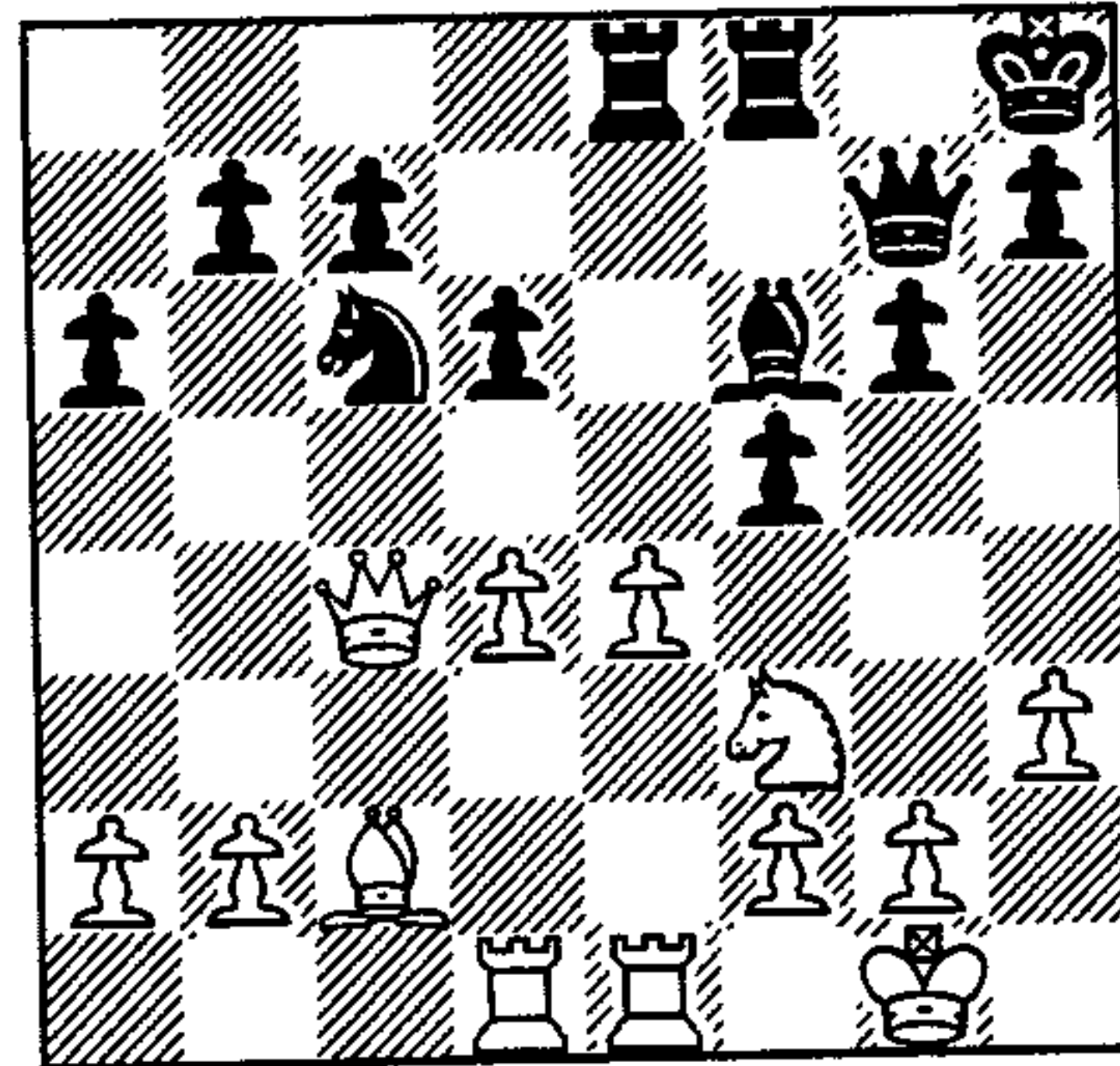
Exercise 42: White to move



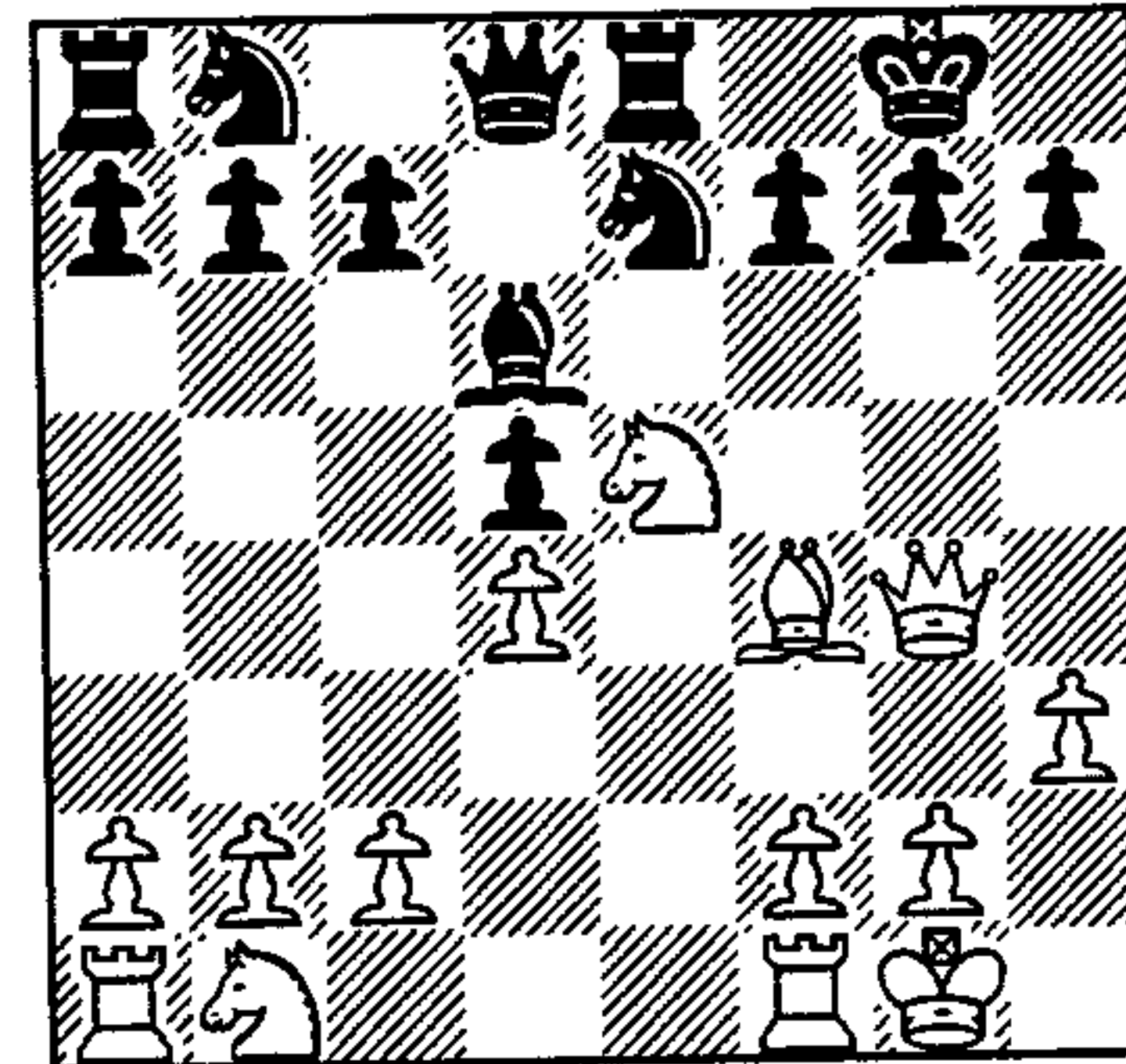
Exercise 43: White to move



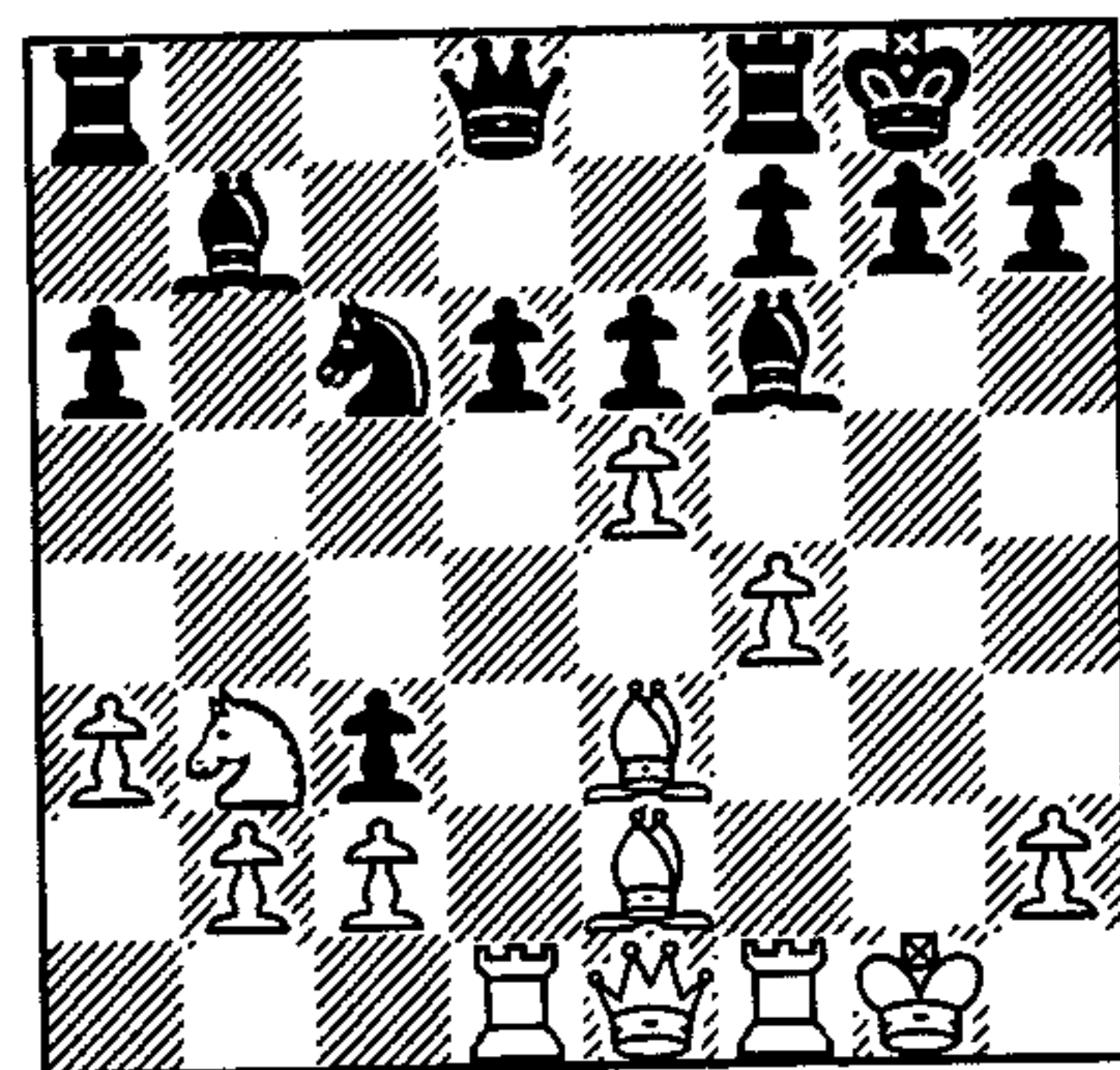
Exercise 46: White to move



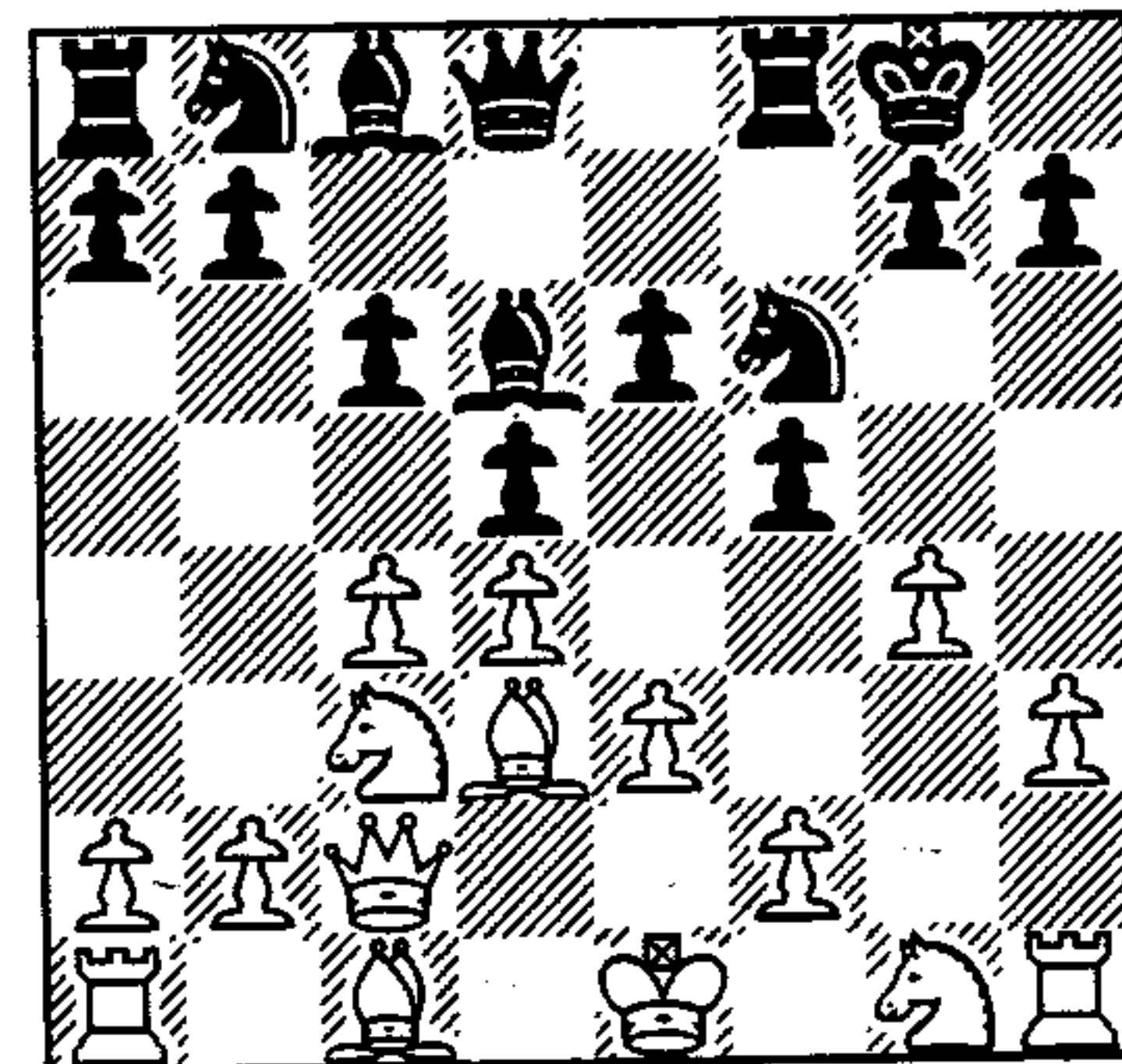
Exercise 44: White to move



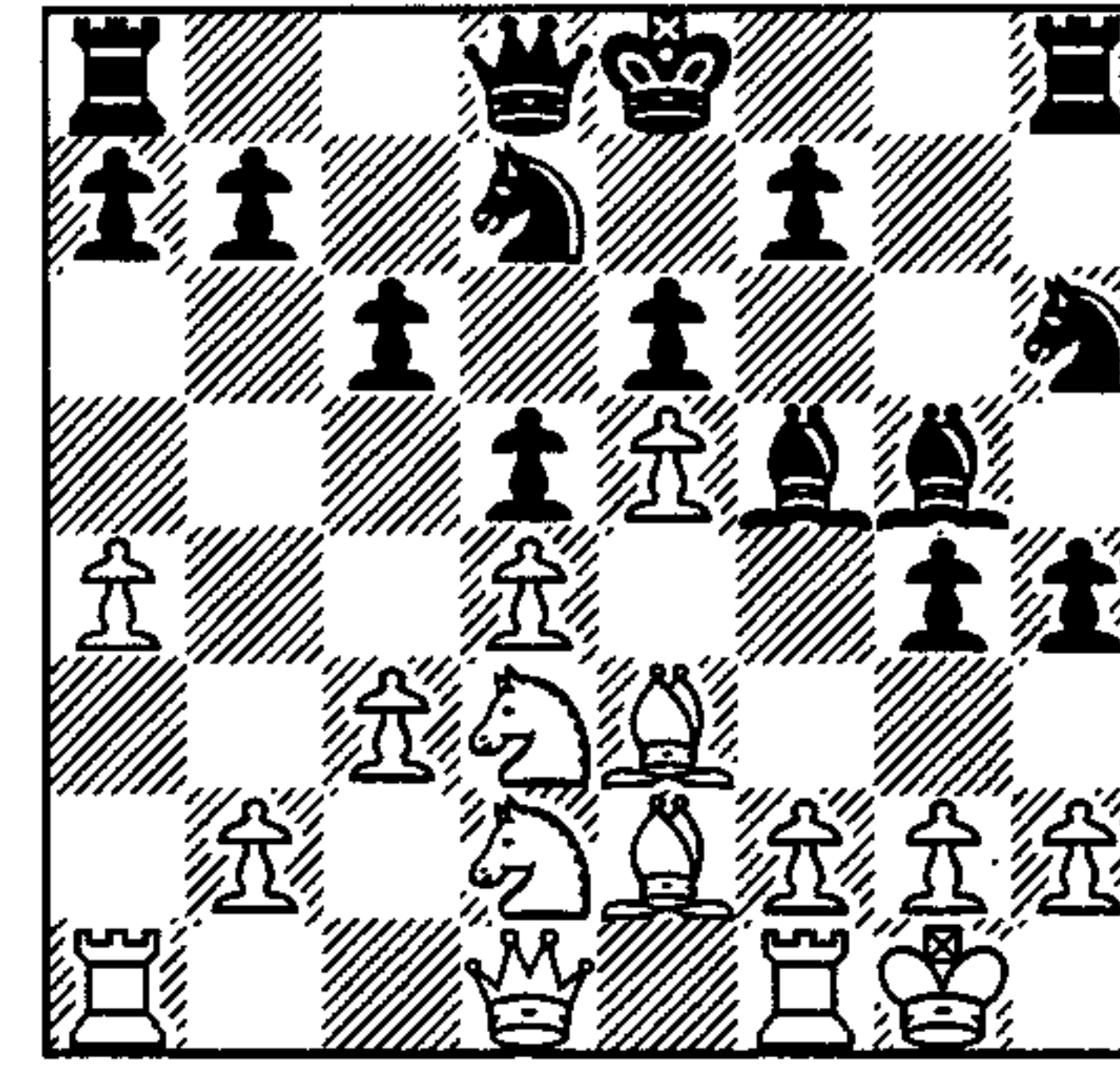
Exercise 47: Black to move



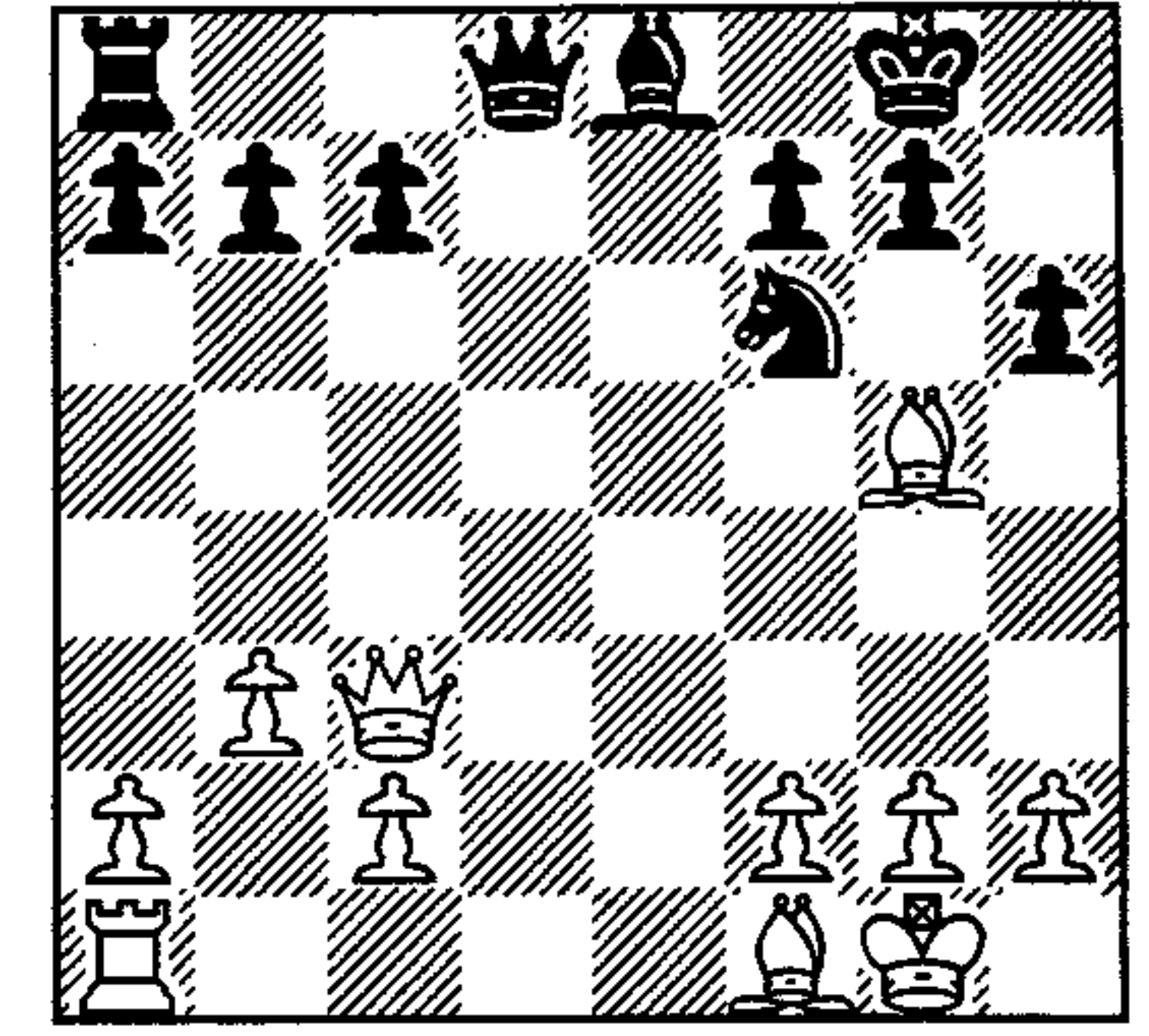
Exercise 45: Black to move



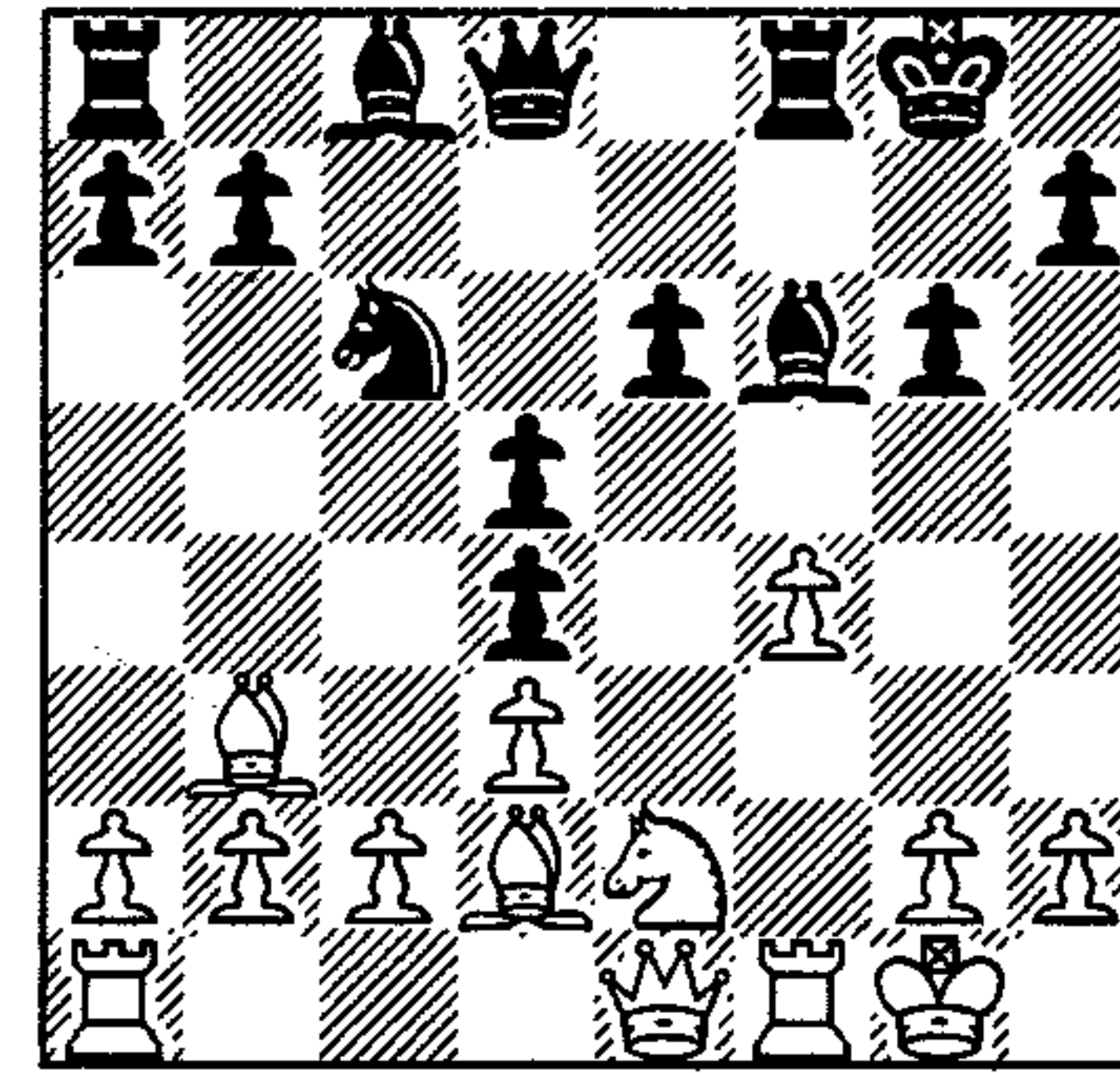
Exercise 48: Black to move



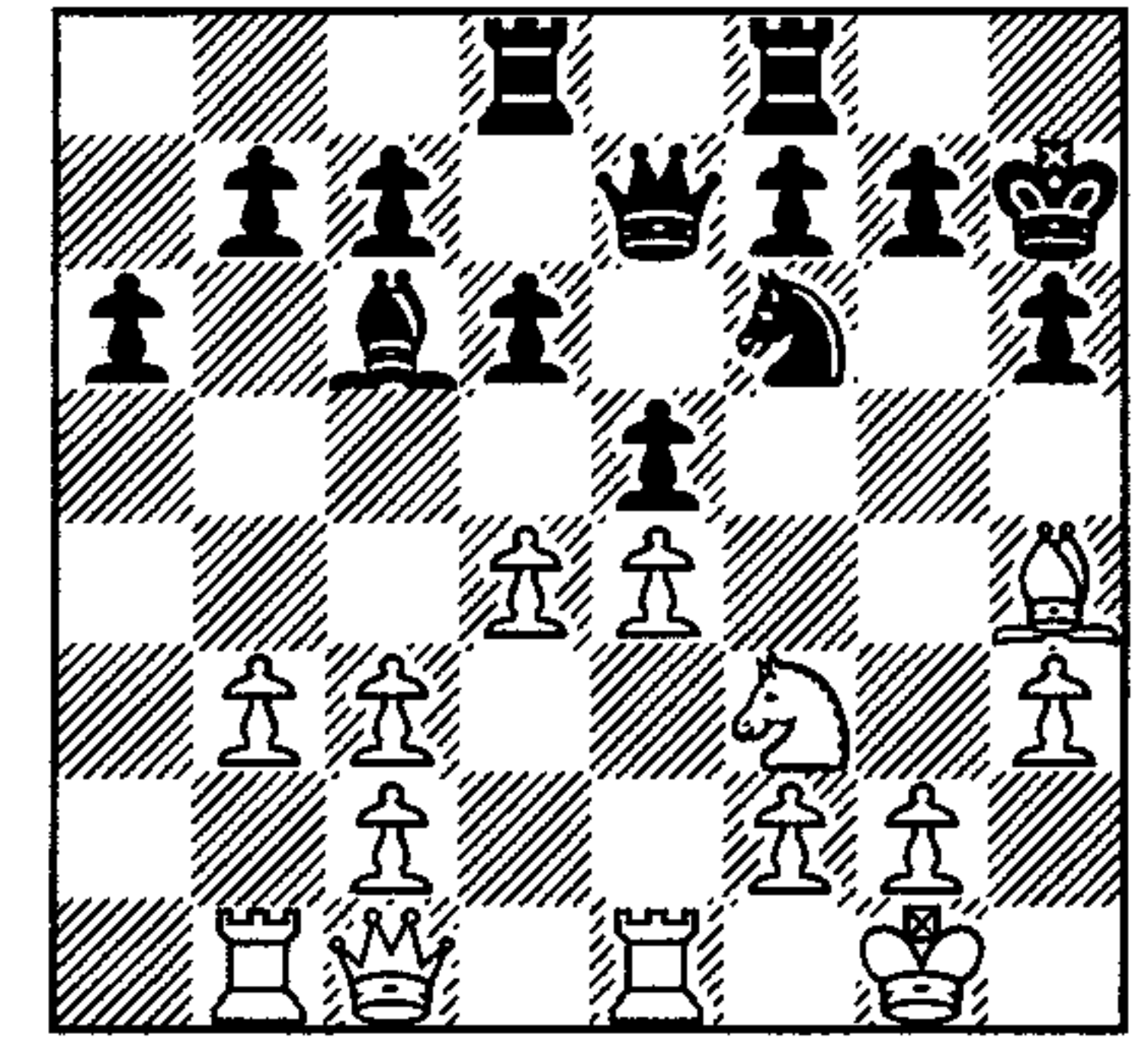
Exercise 49: White to move



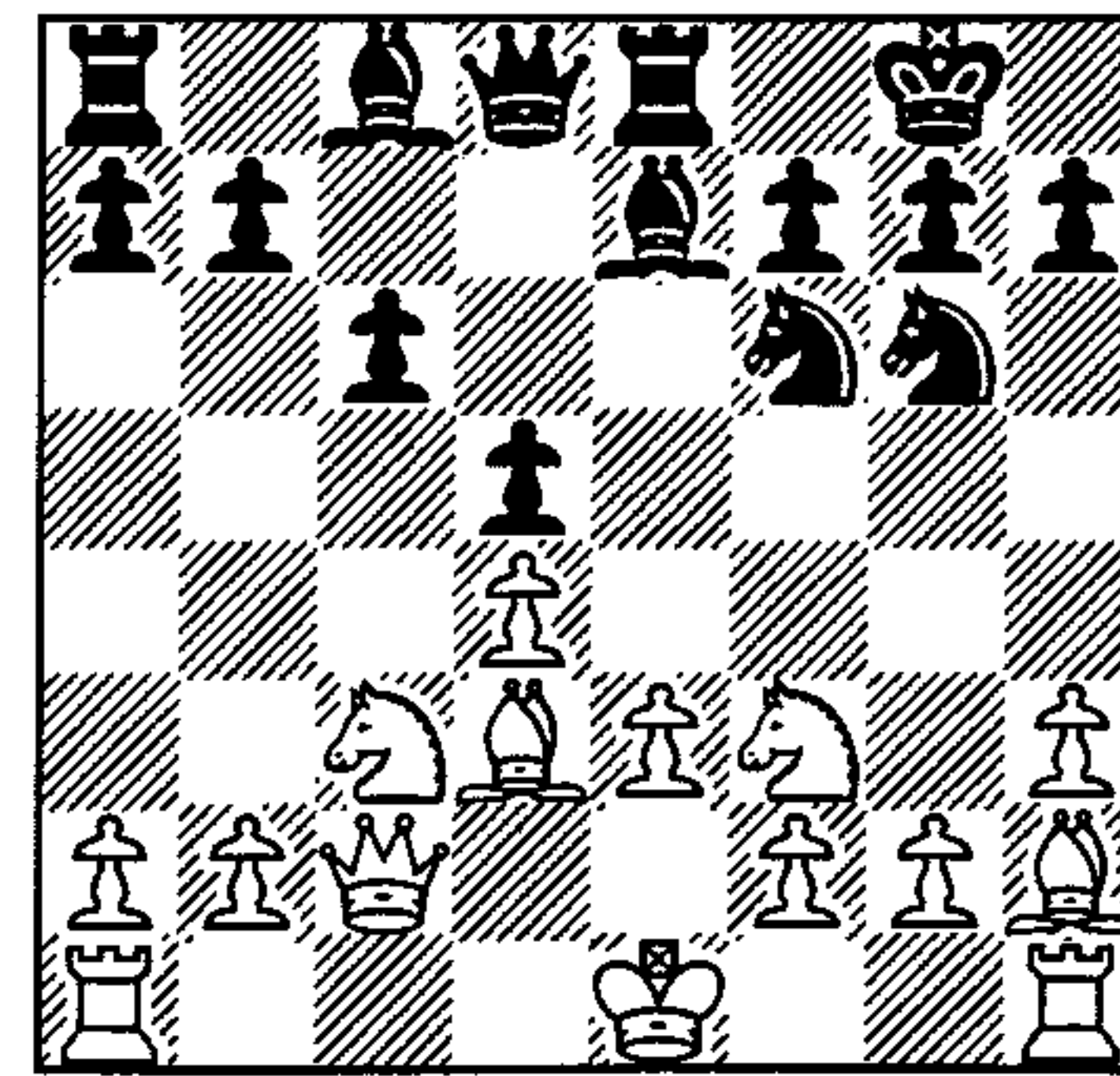
Exercise 52: White to move



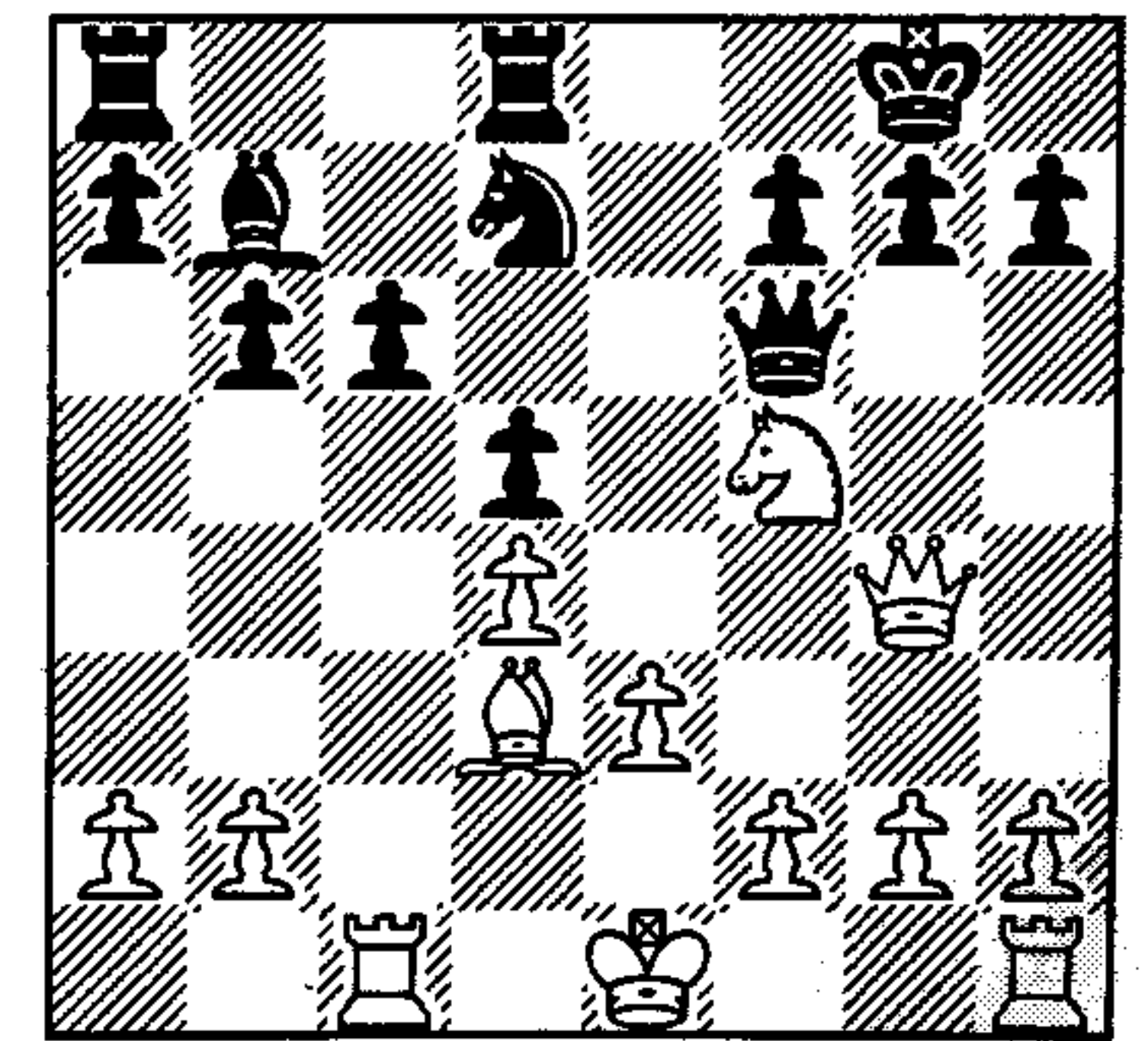
Exercise 50: White to move



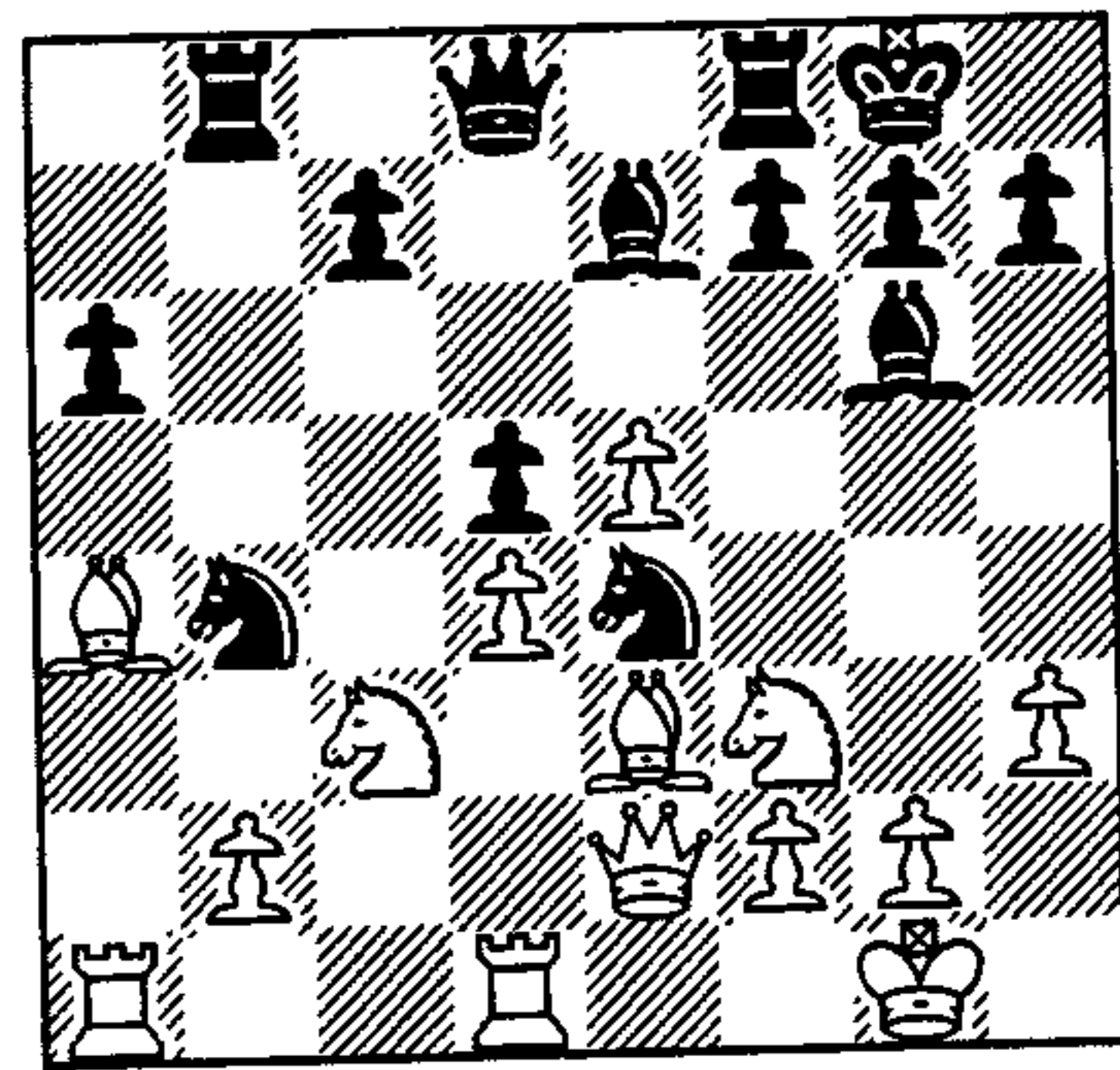
Exercise 53: White to move



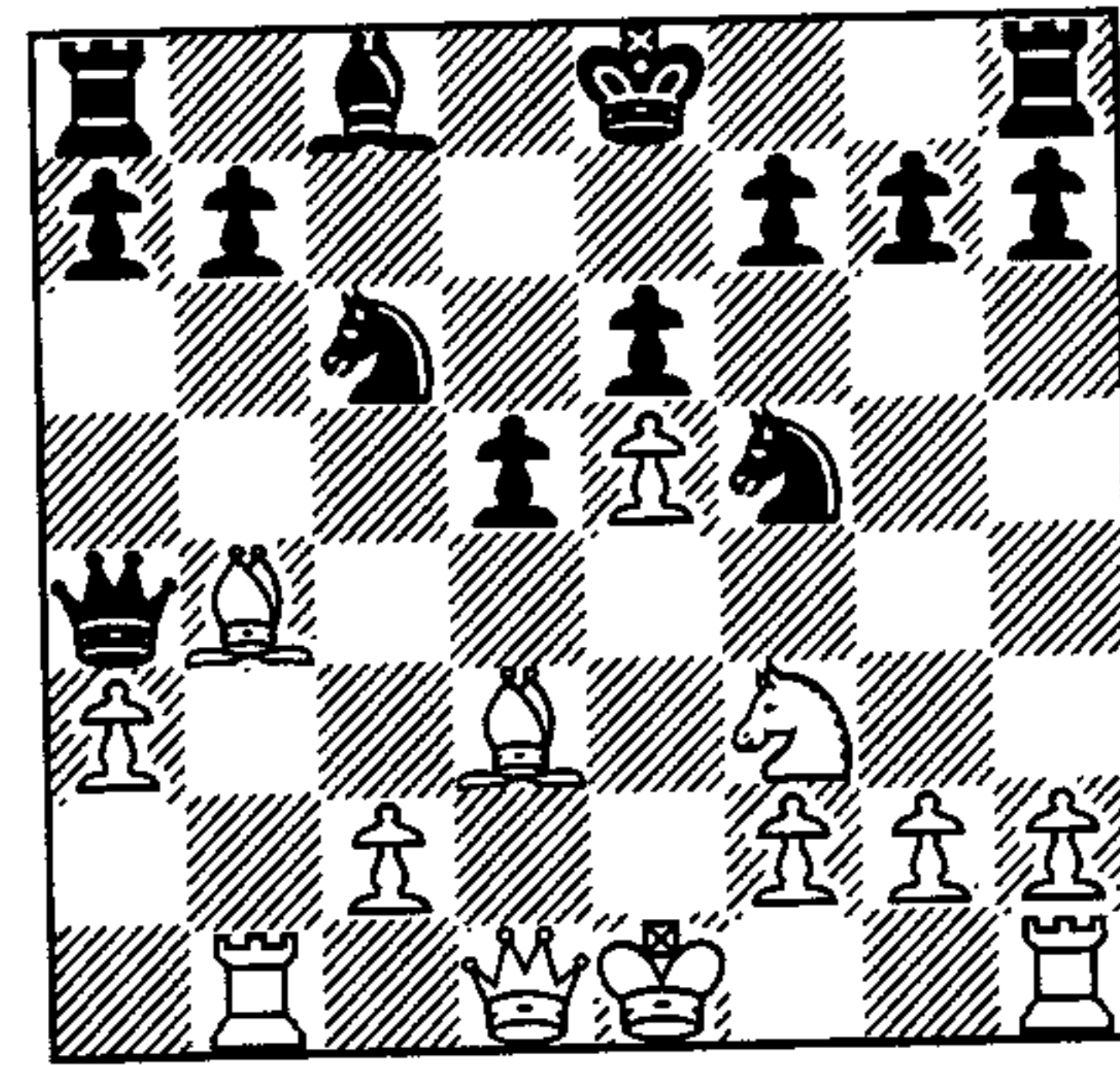
Exercise 51: White to move



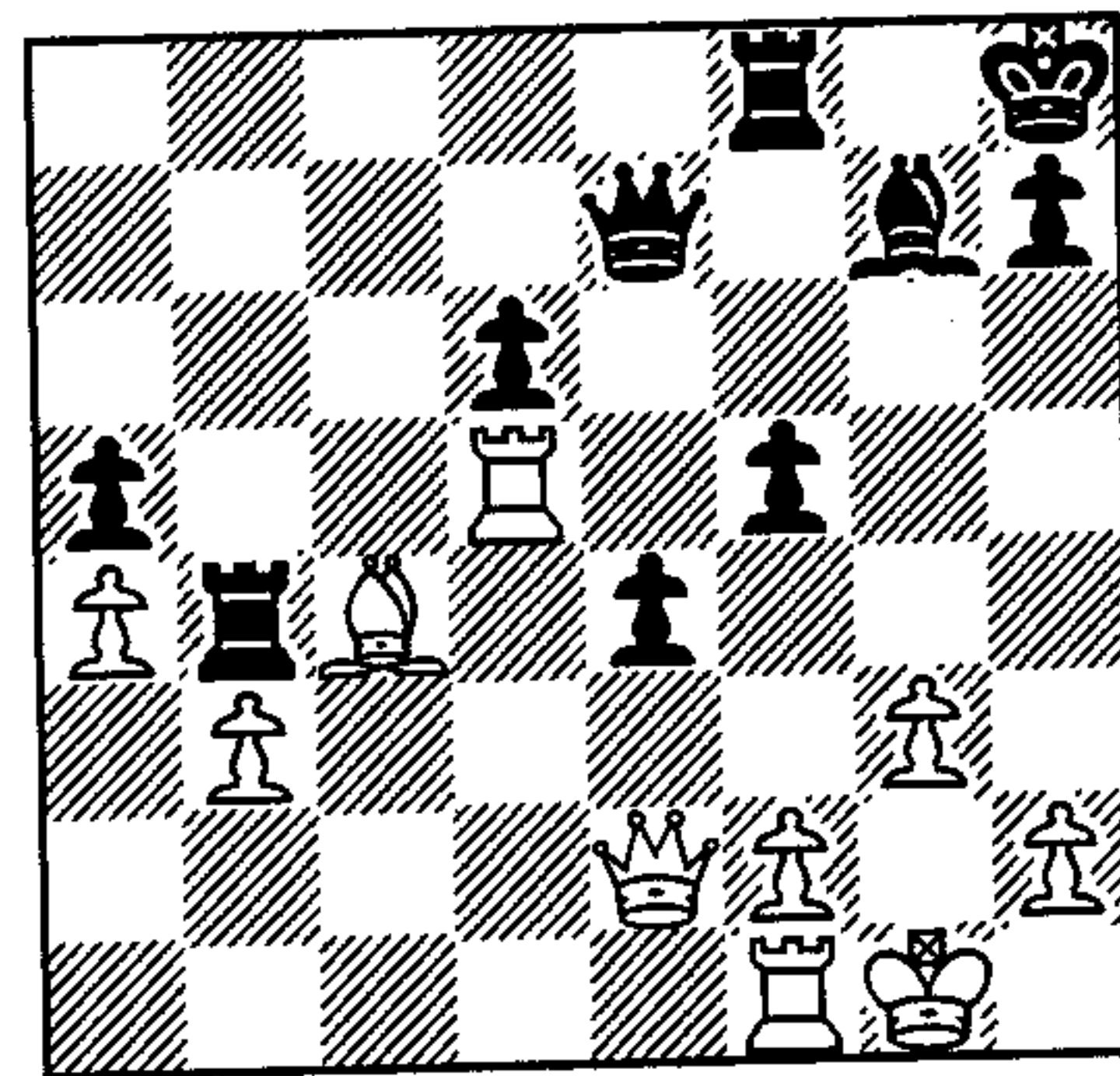
Exercise 54: White to move



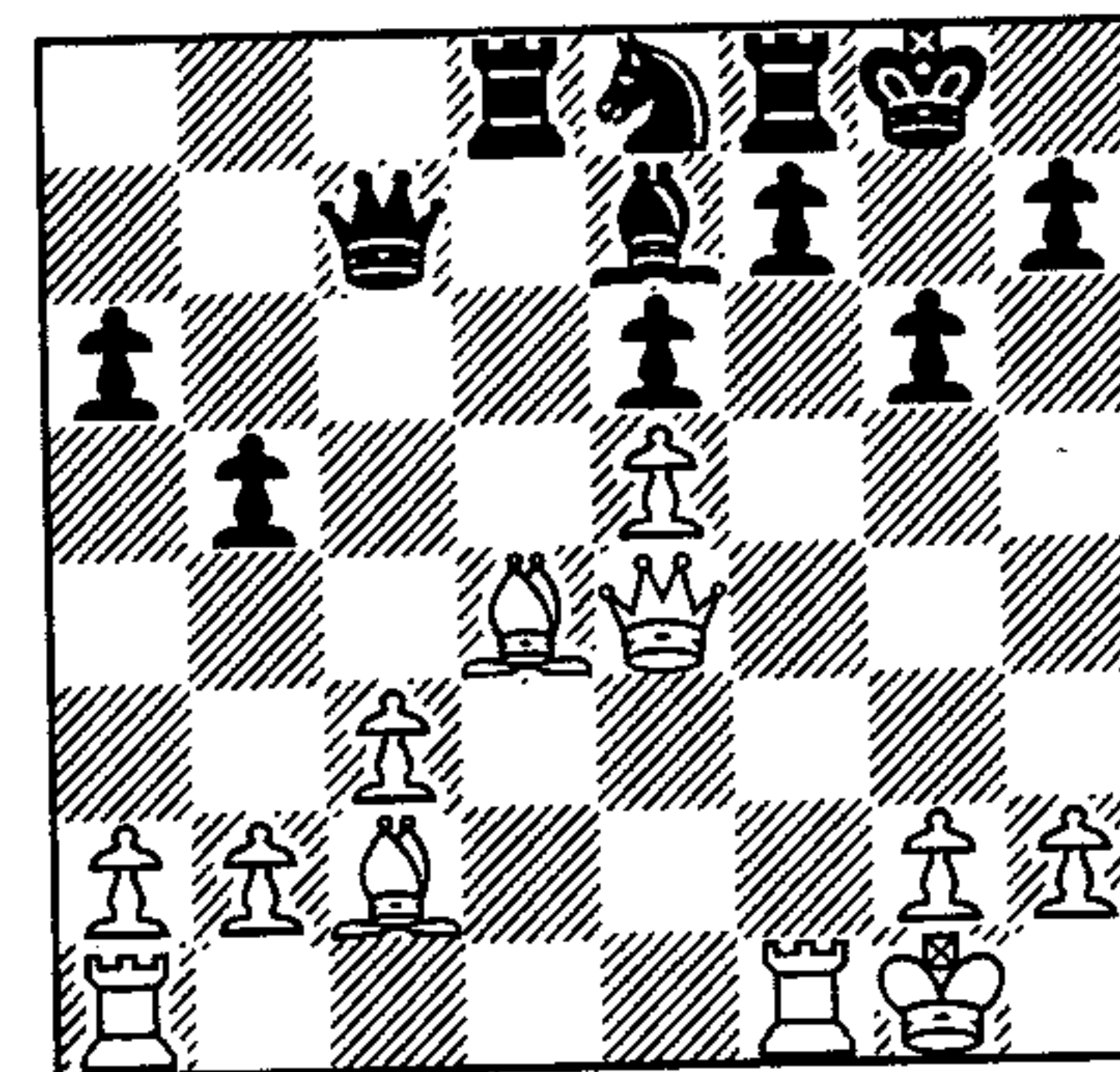
Exercise 55: White to move



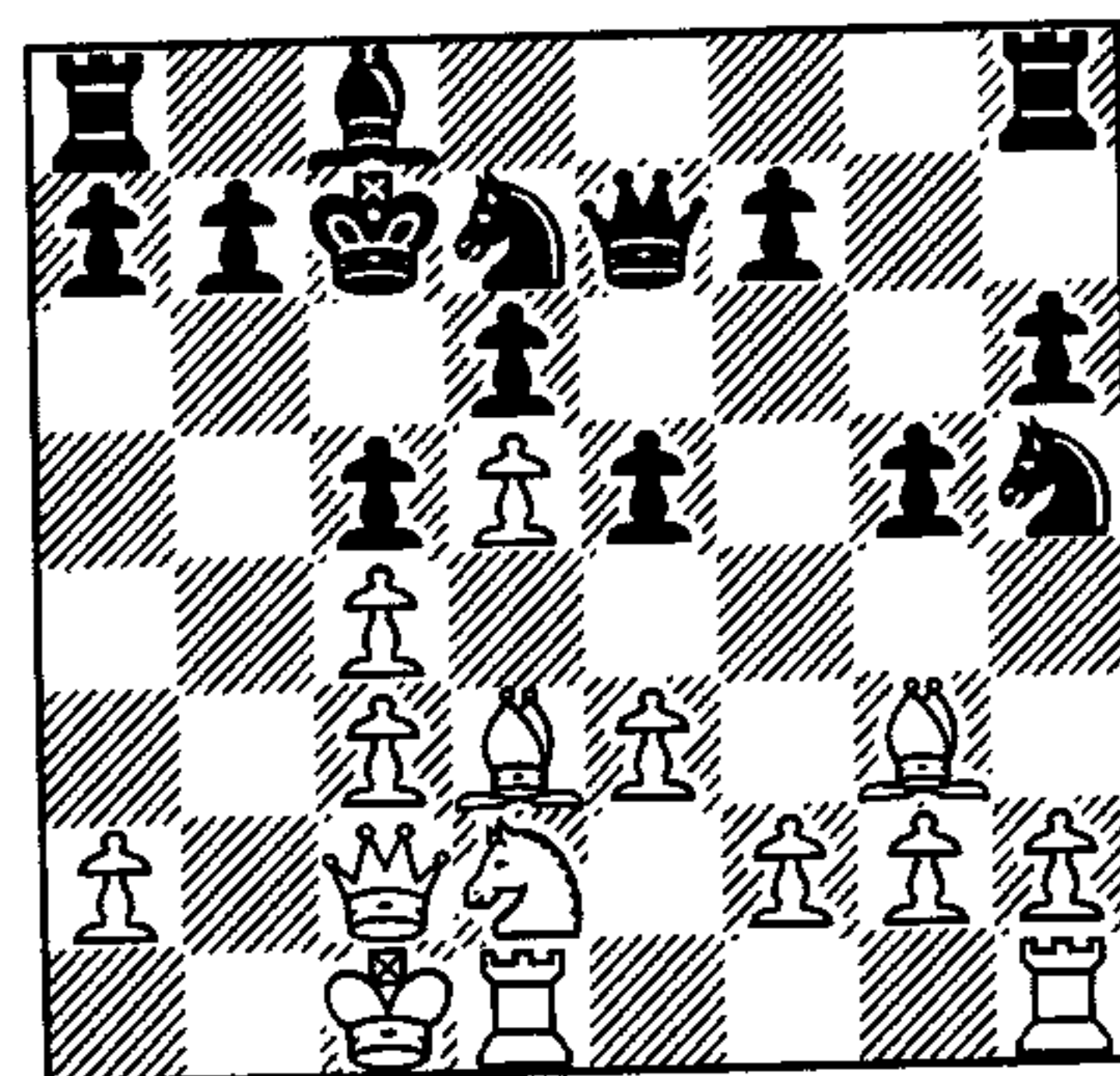
Exercise 58: White to move



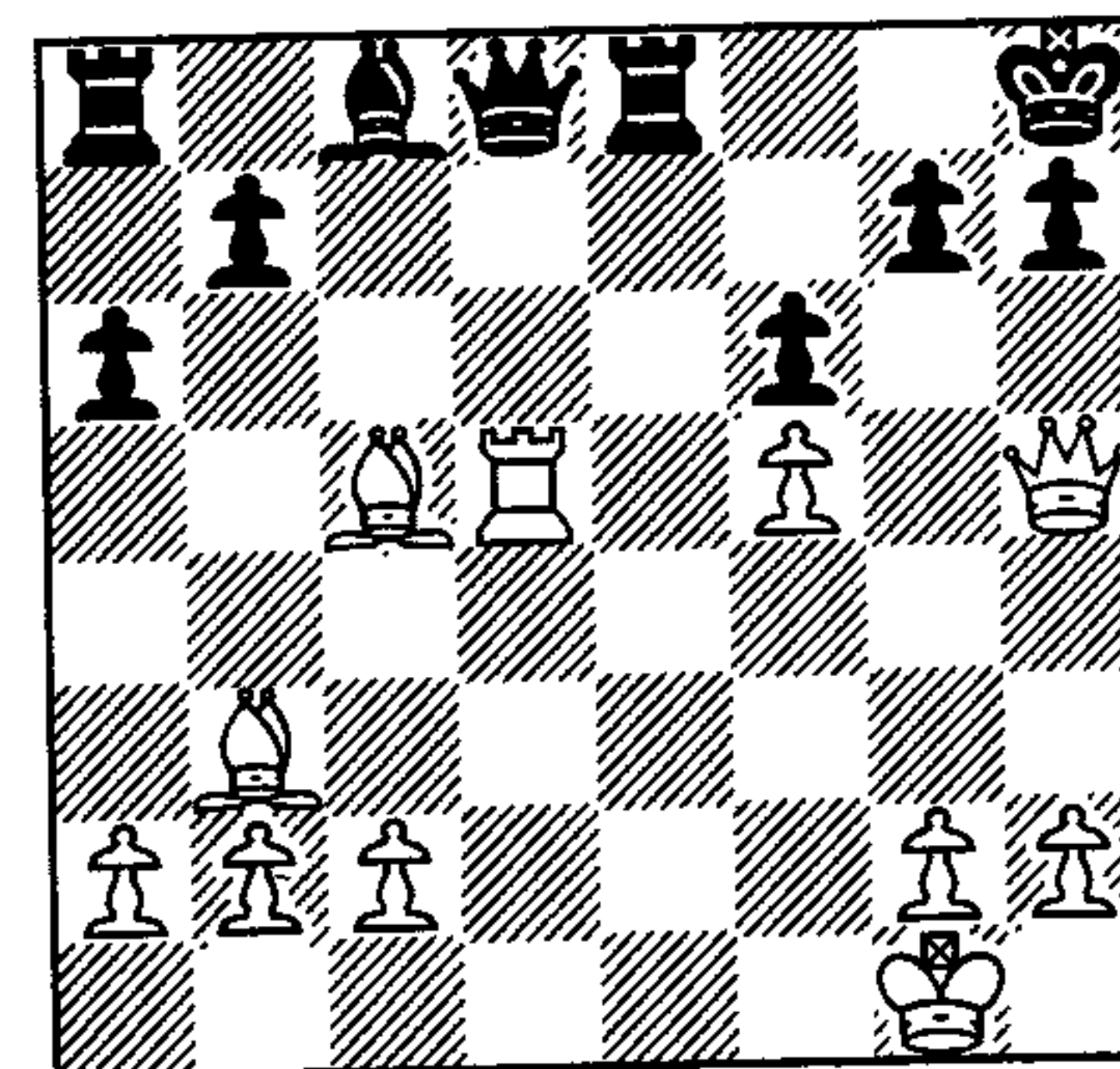
Exercise 56: White to move



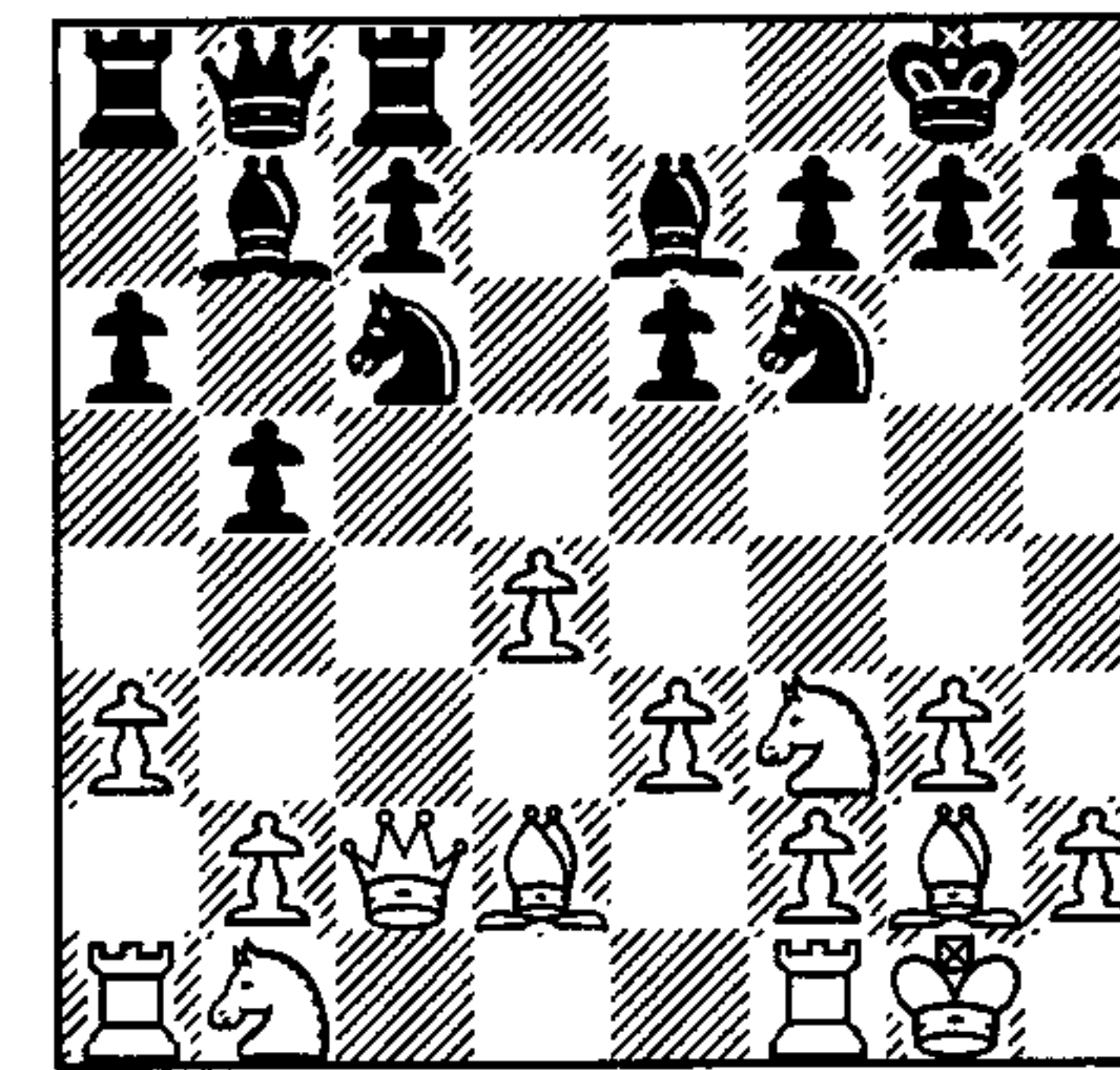
Exercise 59: White to move



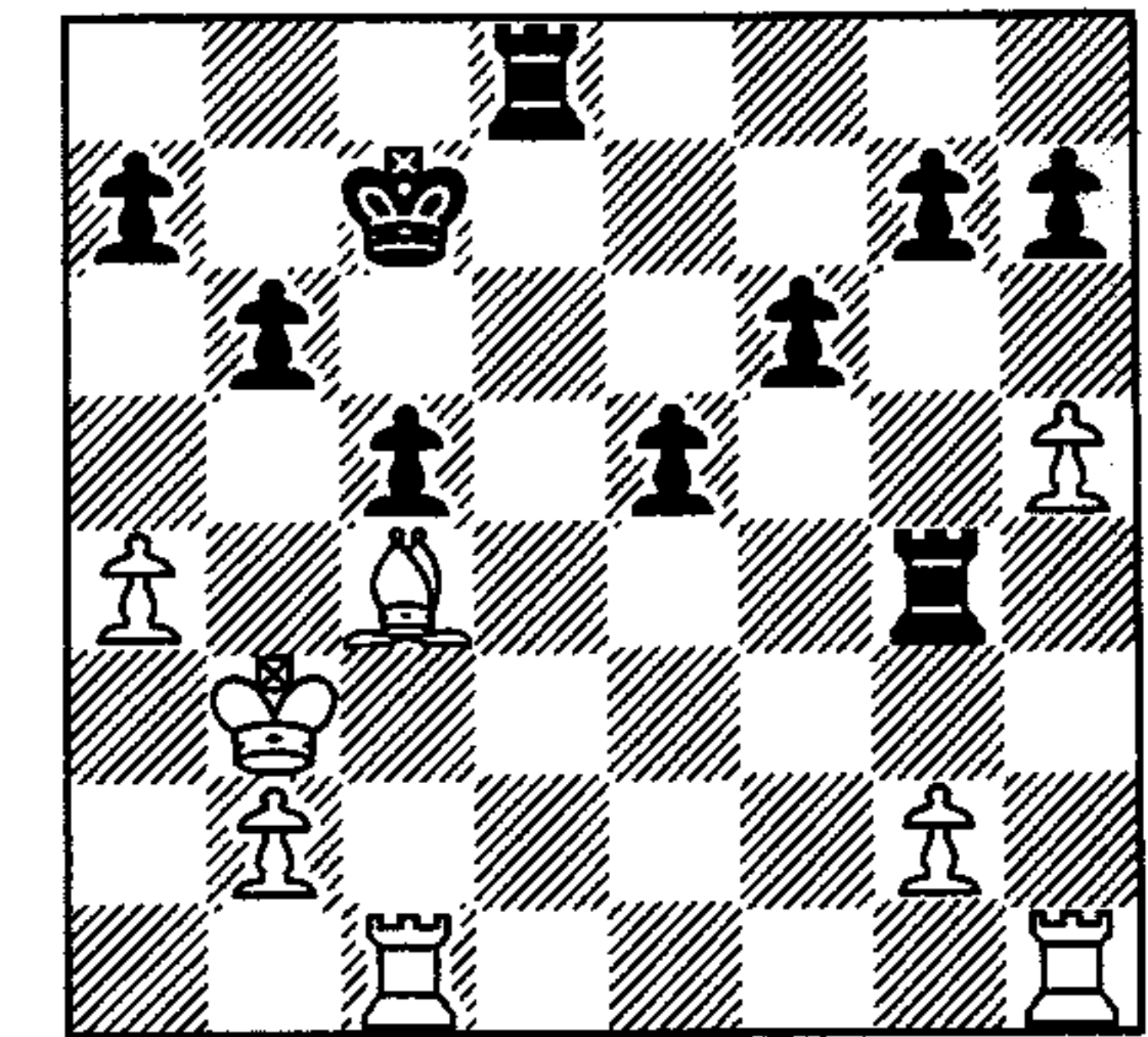
Exercise 57: White to move



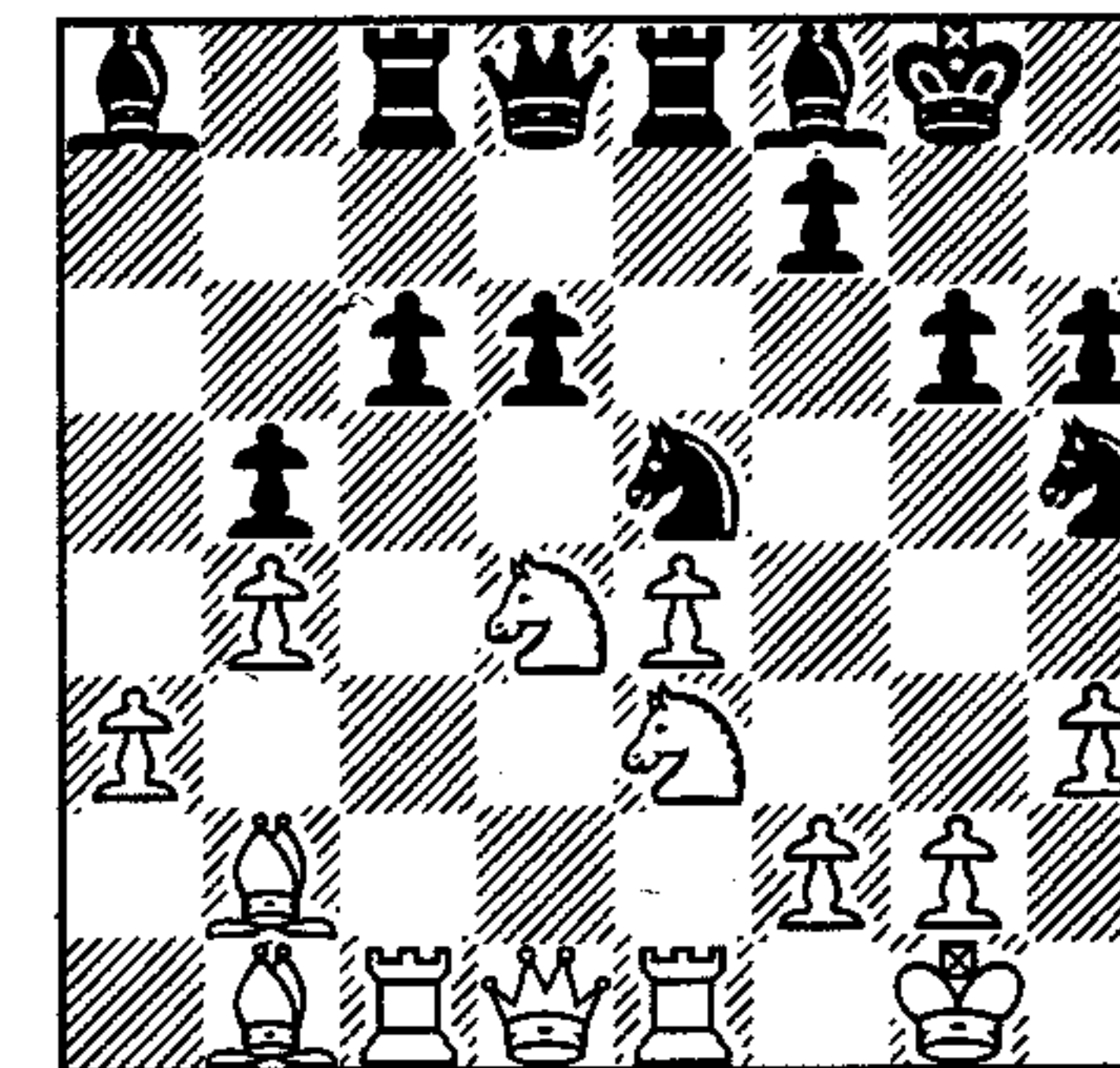
Exercise 60: Black to move



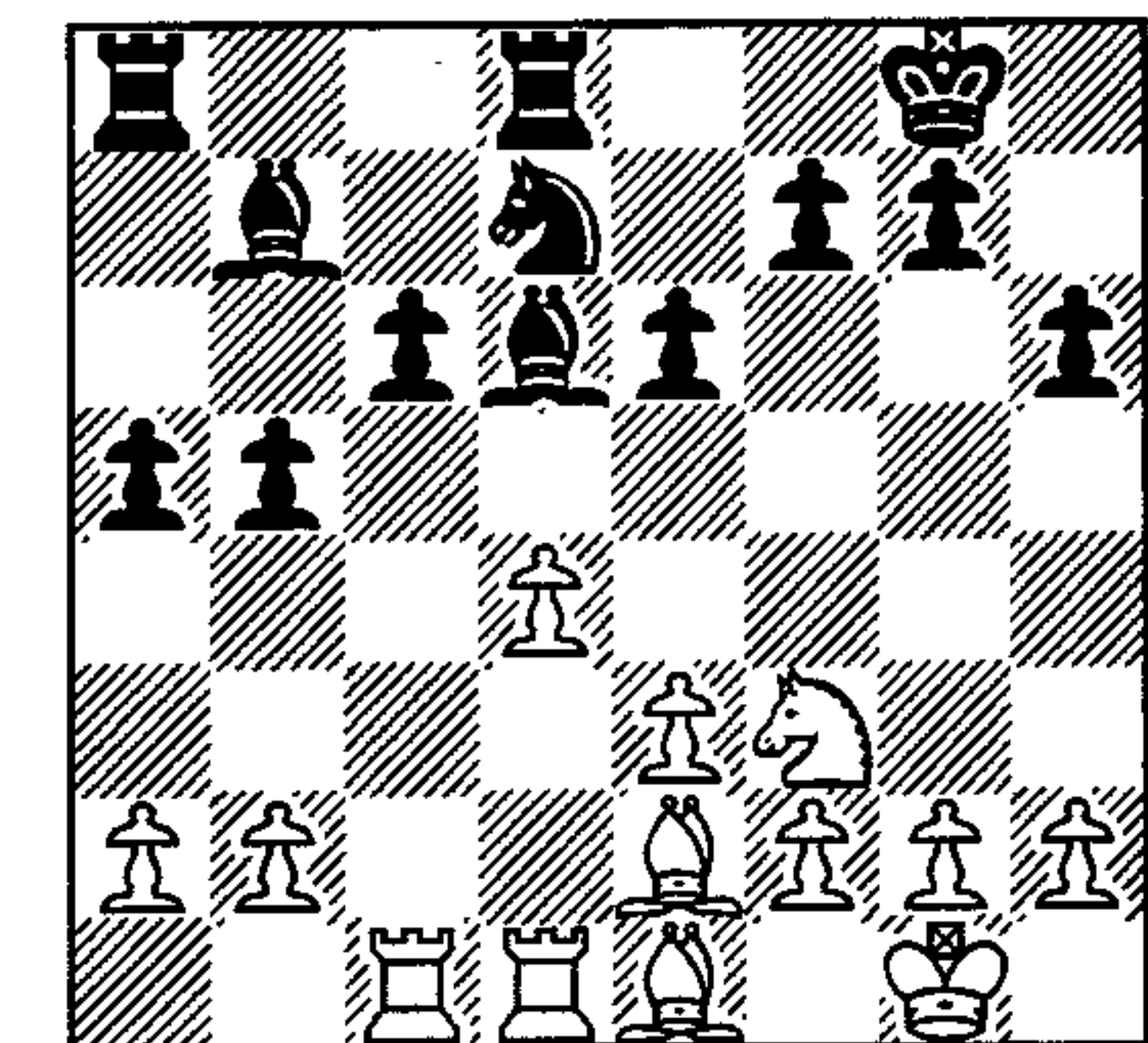
Exercise 61: White to move



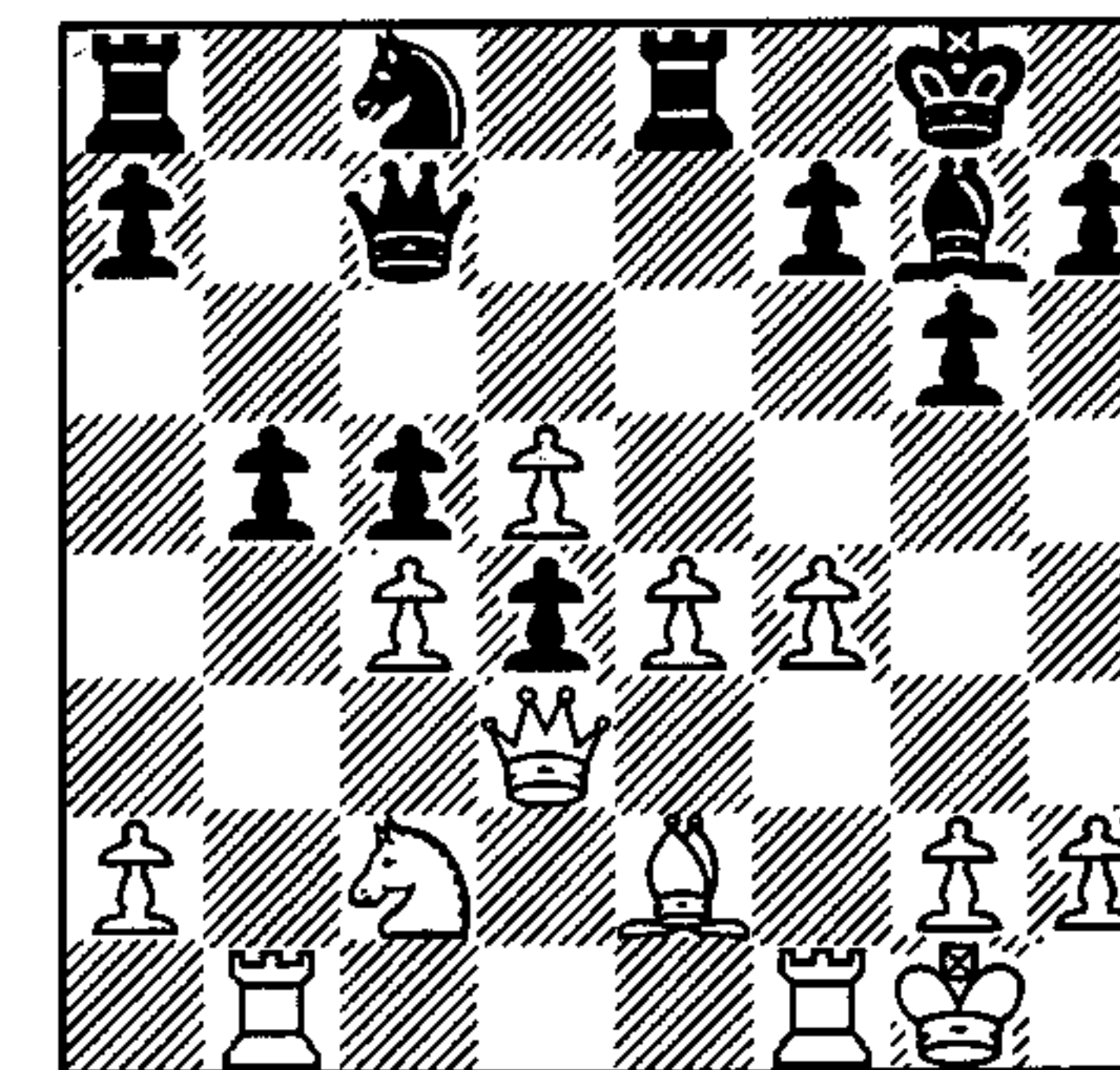
Exercise 64: White to move



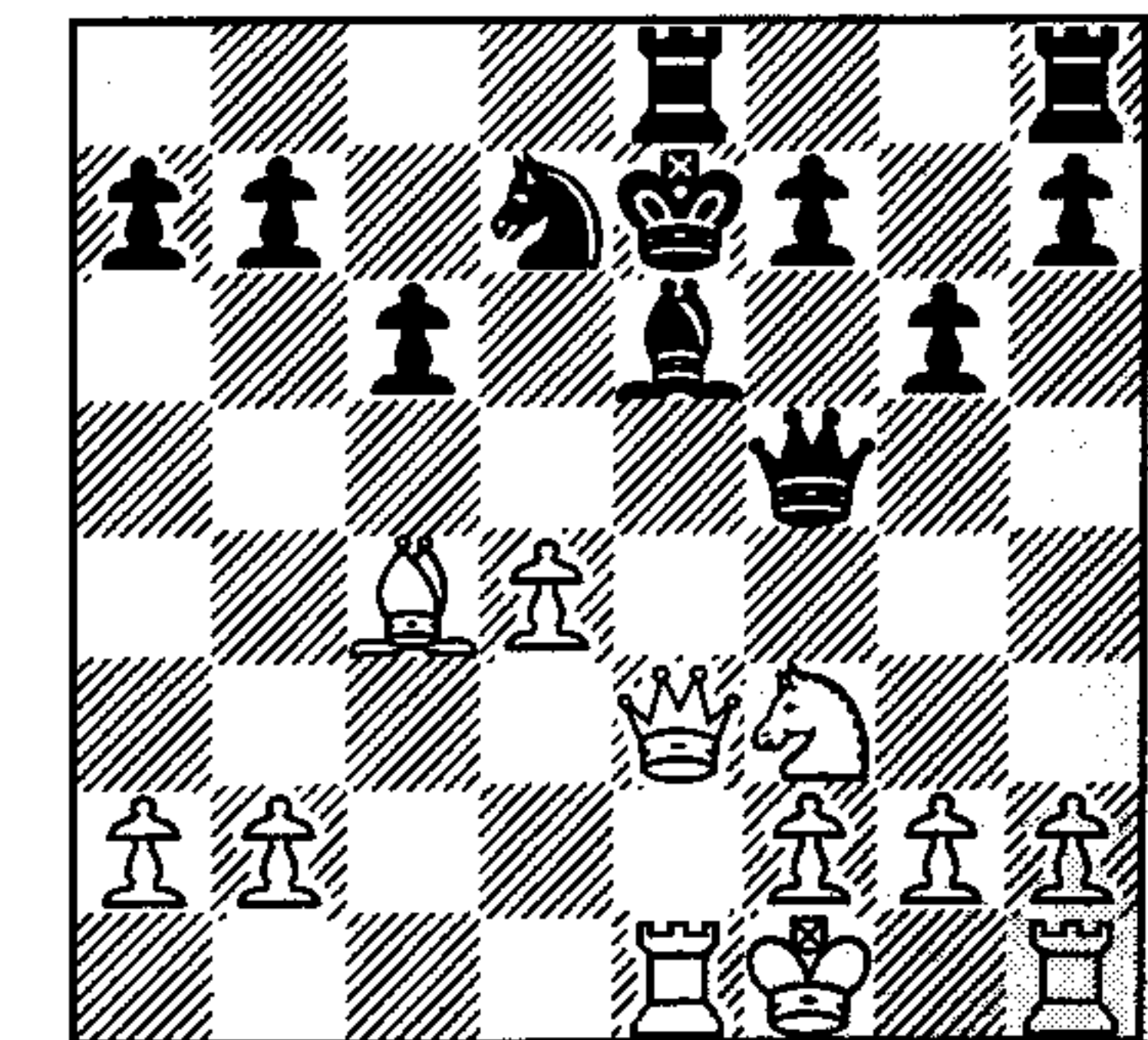
Exercise 62: White to move



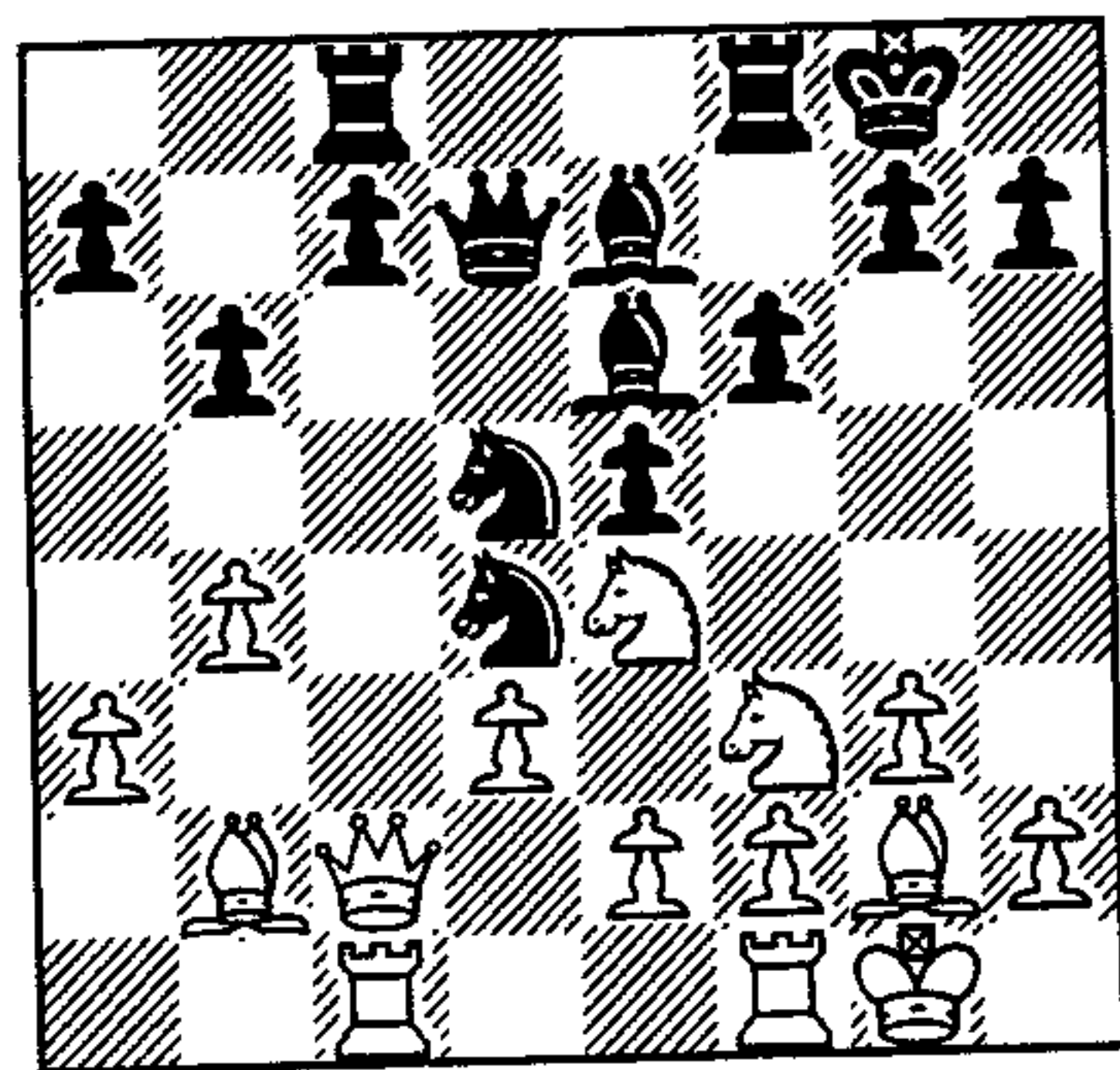
Exercise 65: White to move



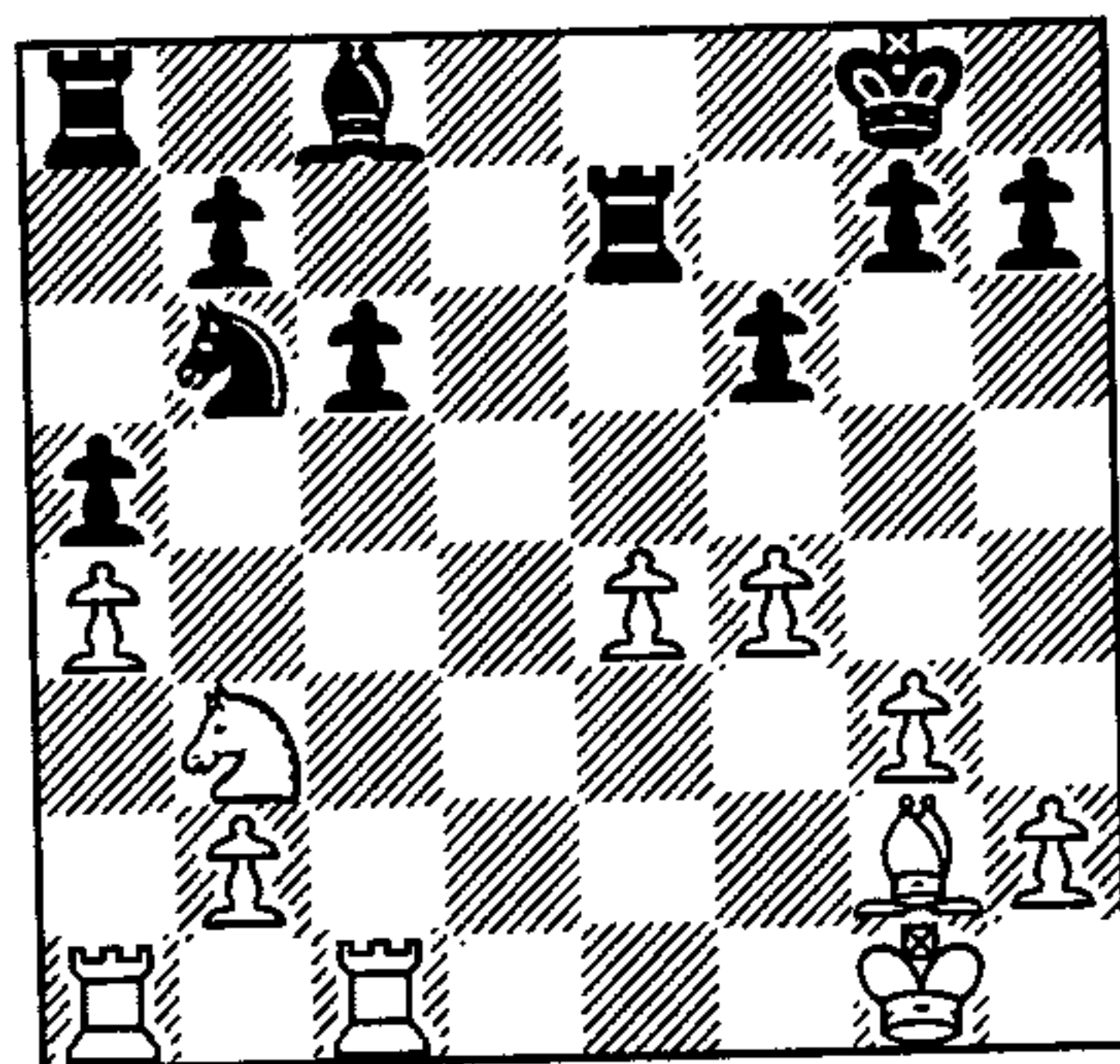
Exercise 63: White to move



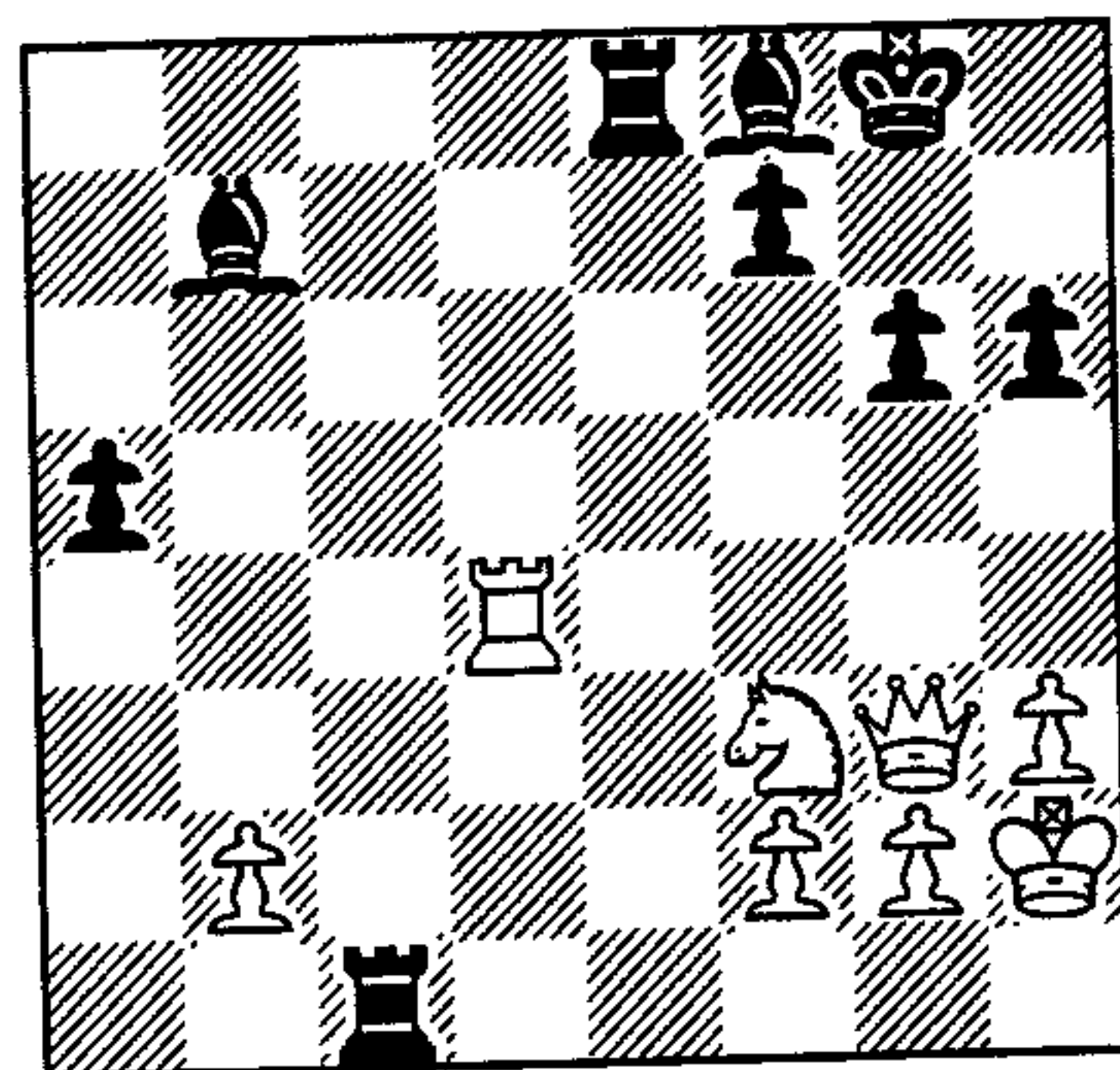
Exercise 66: White to move



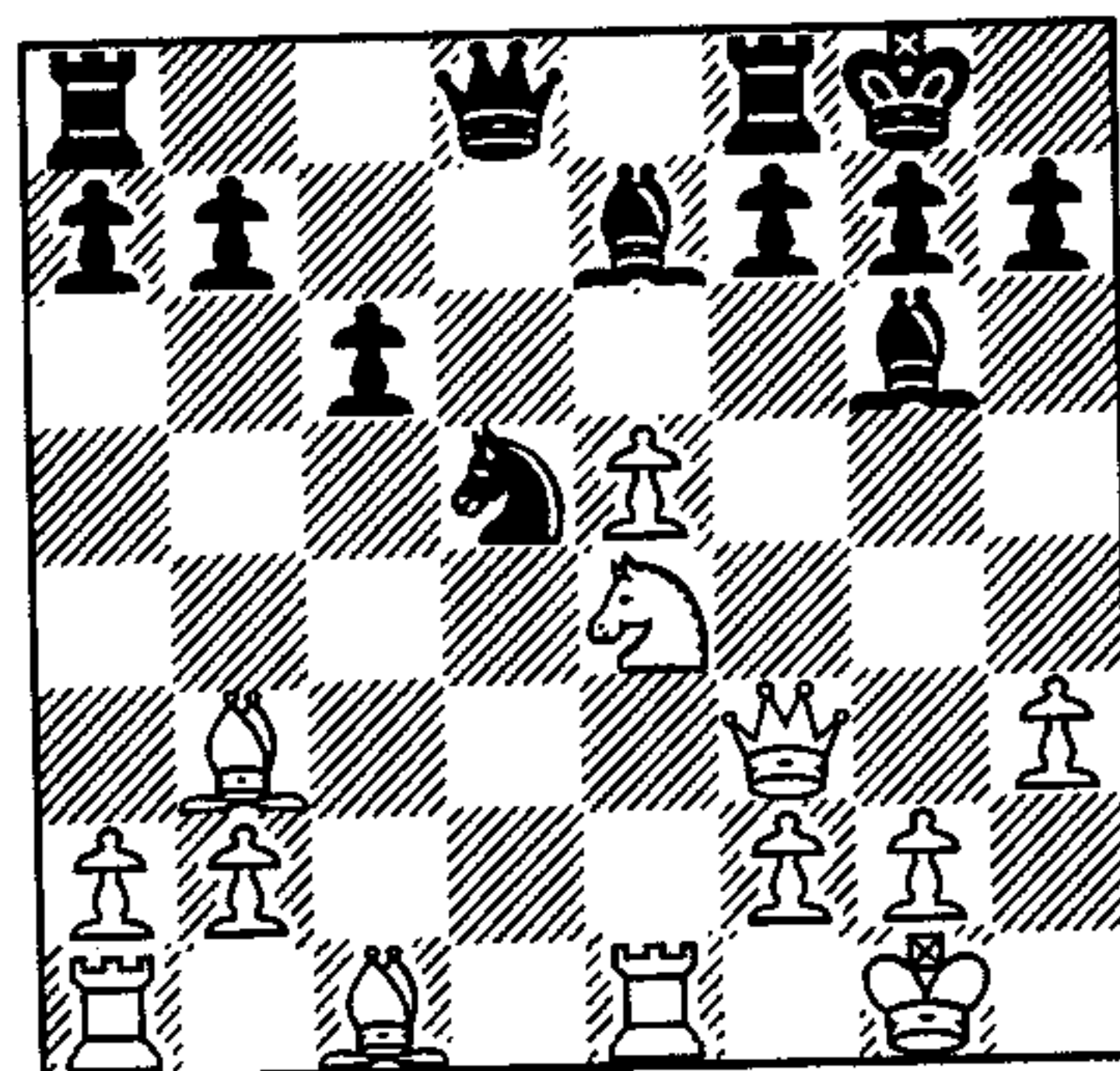
Exercise 67: White to move



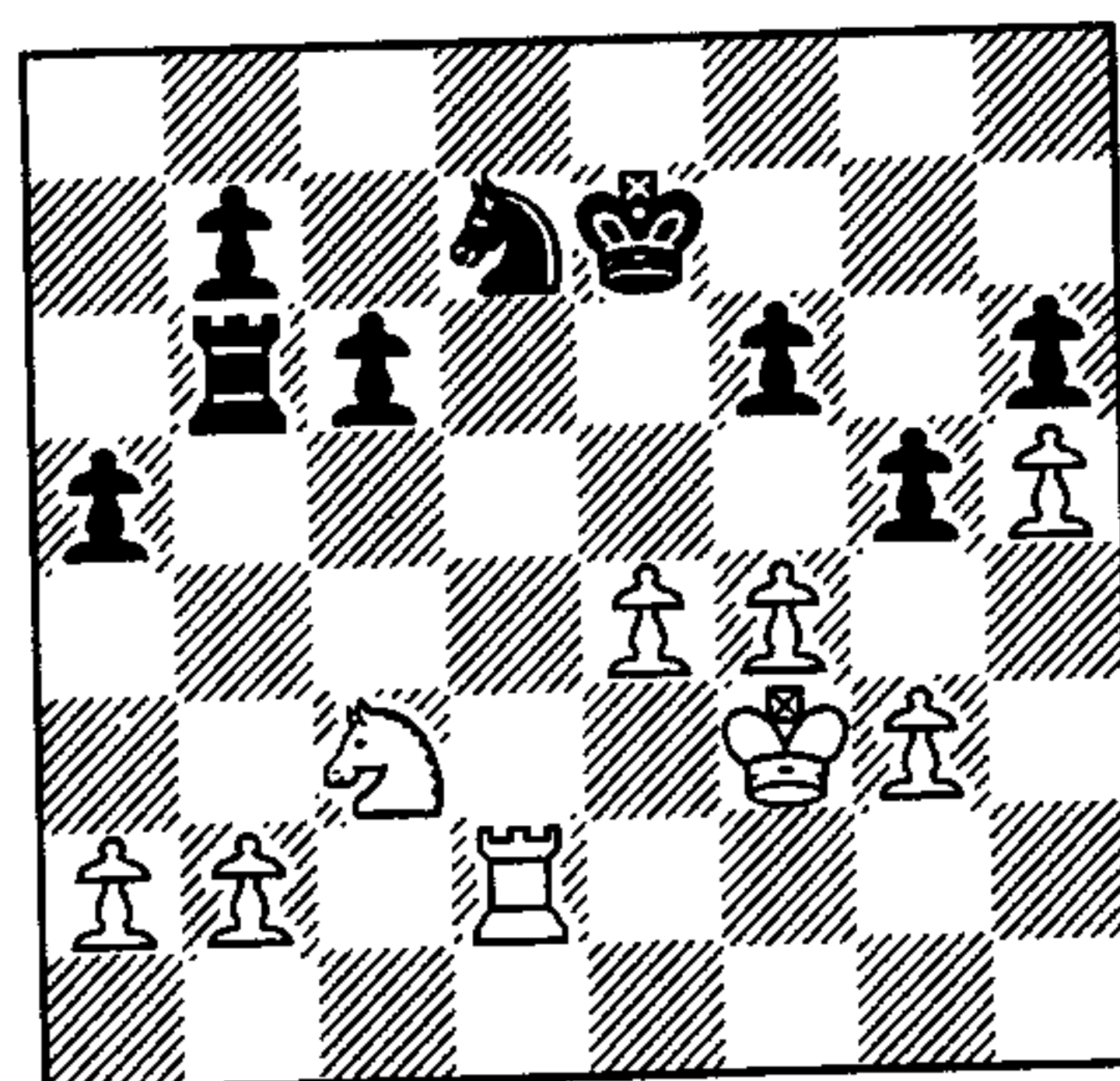
Exercise 70: White to move



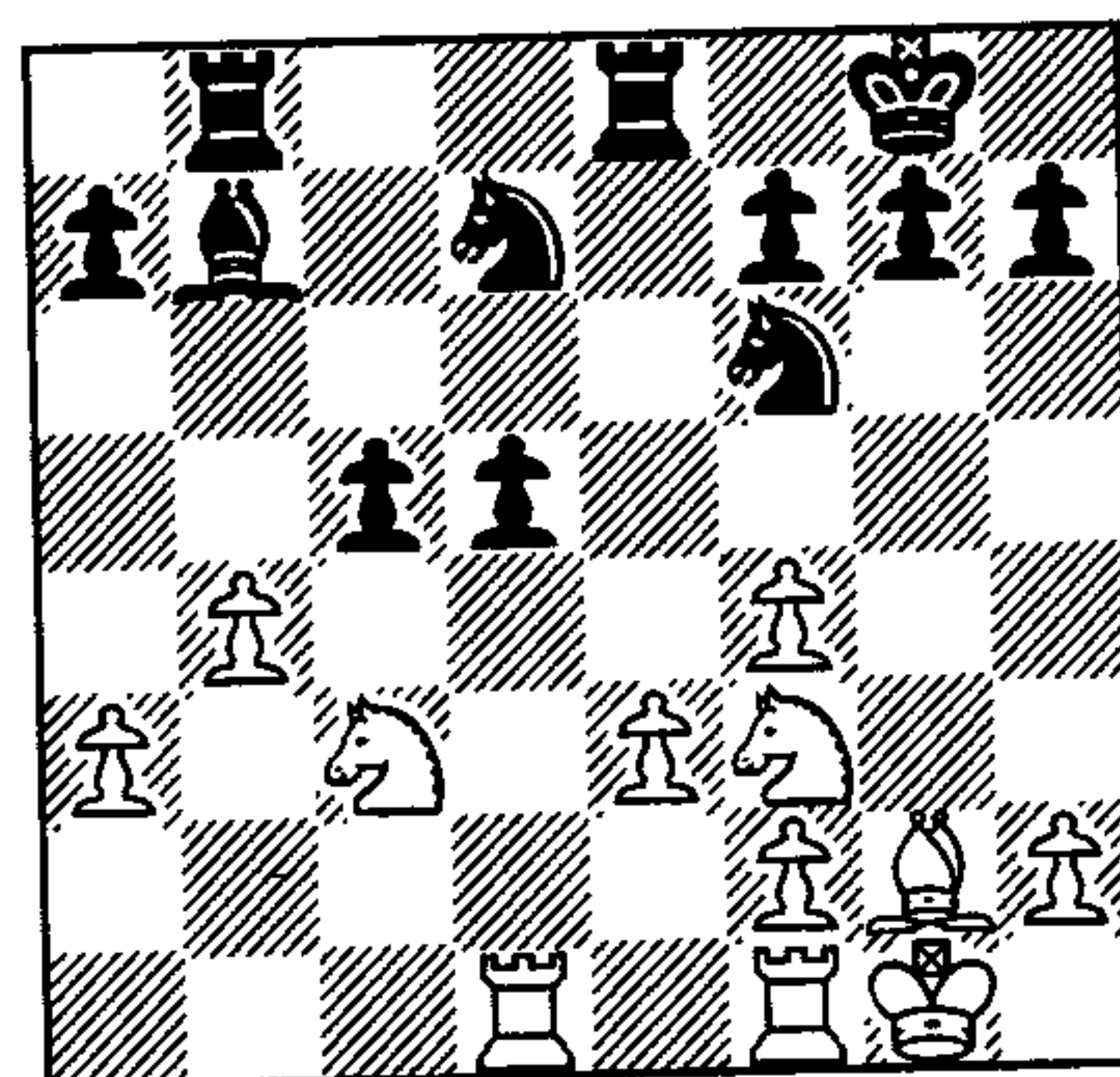
Exercise 68: Black to move



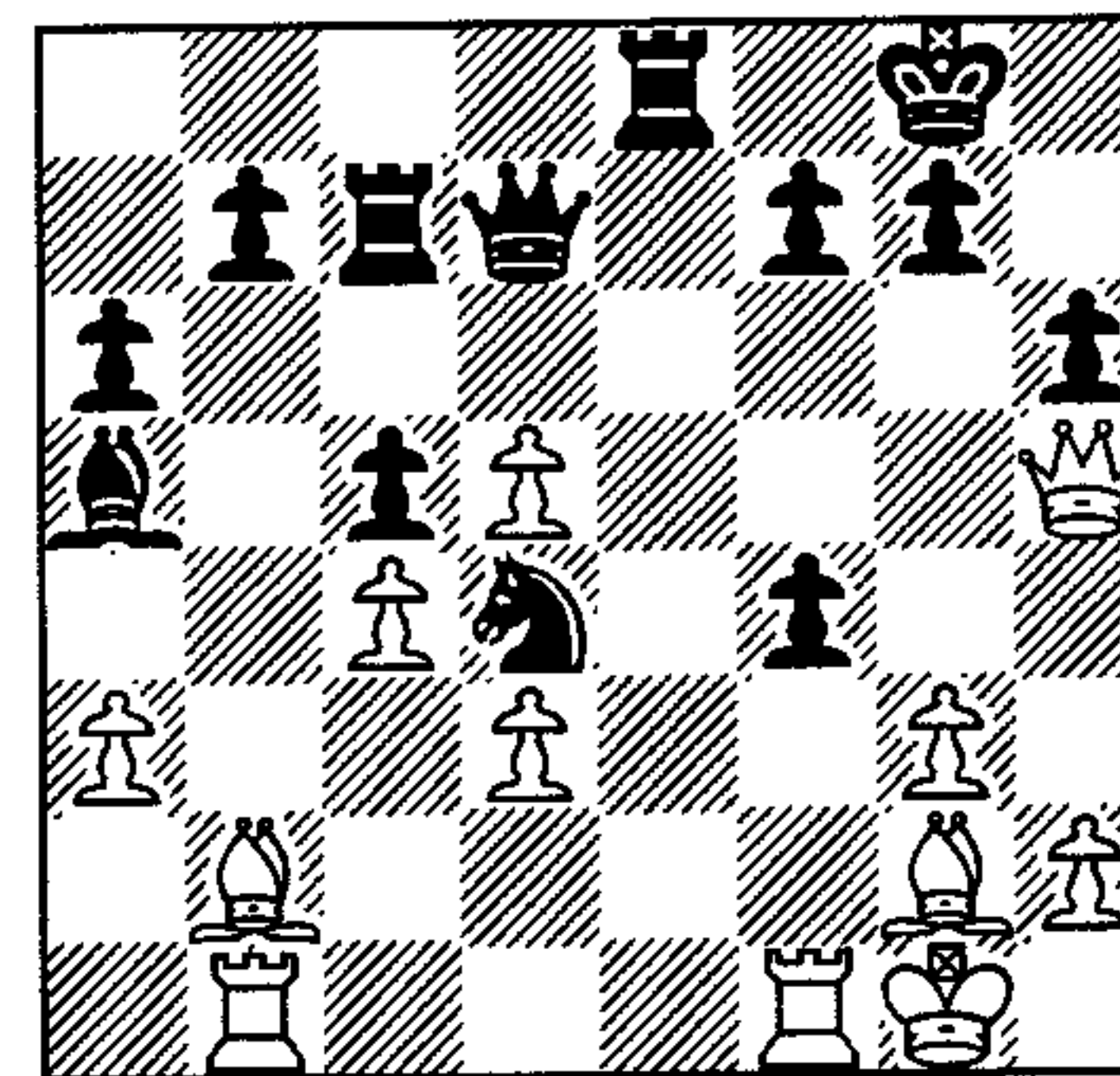
Exercise 71: White to move



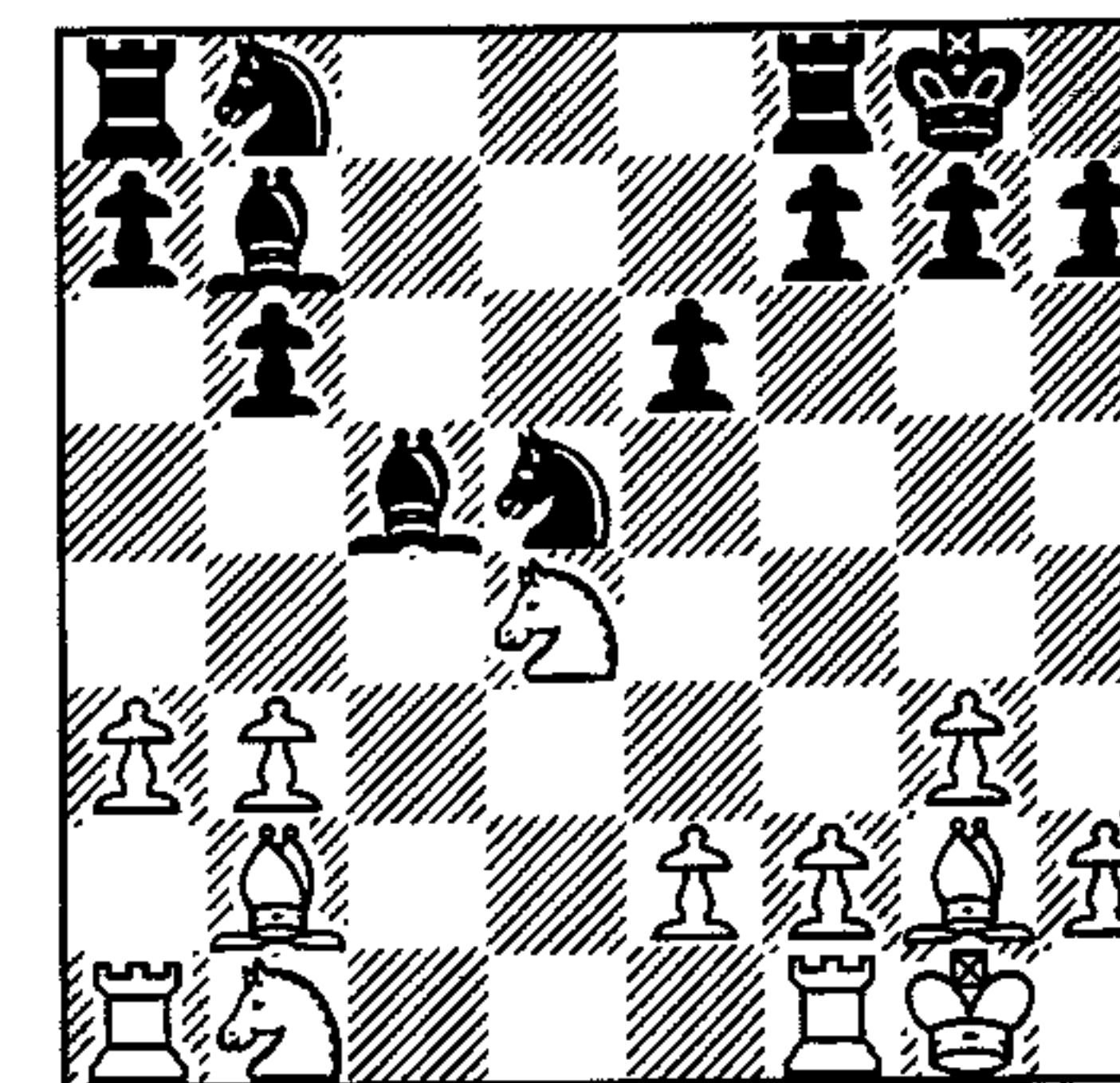
Exercise 69: White to move



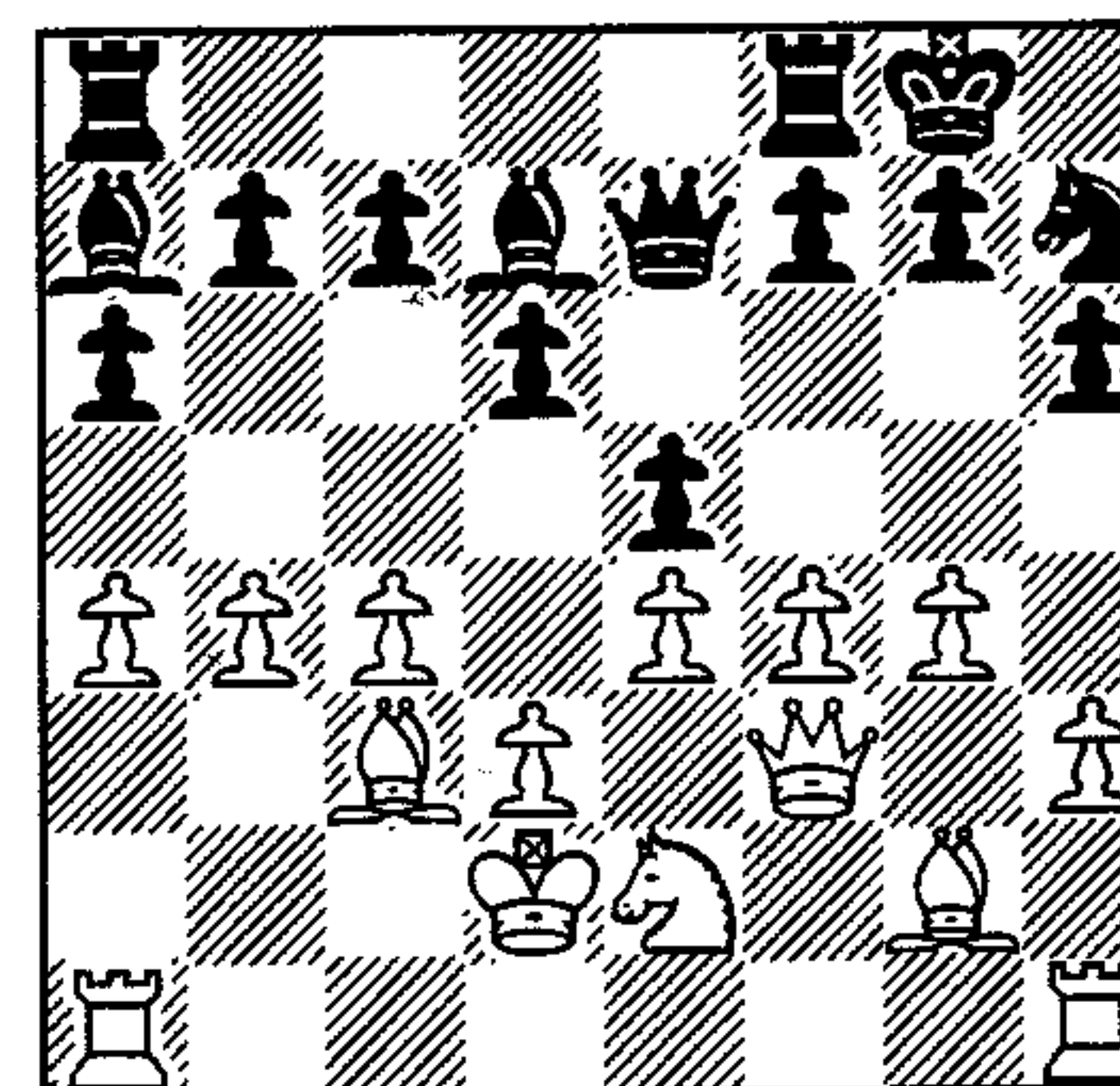
Exercise 72: Black to move



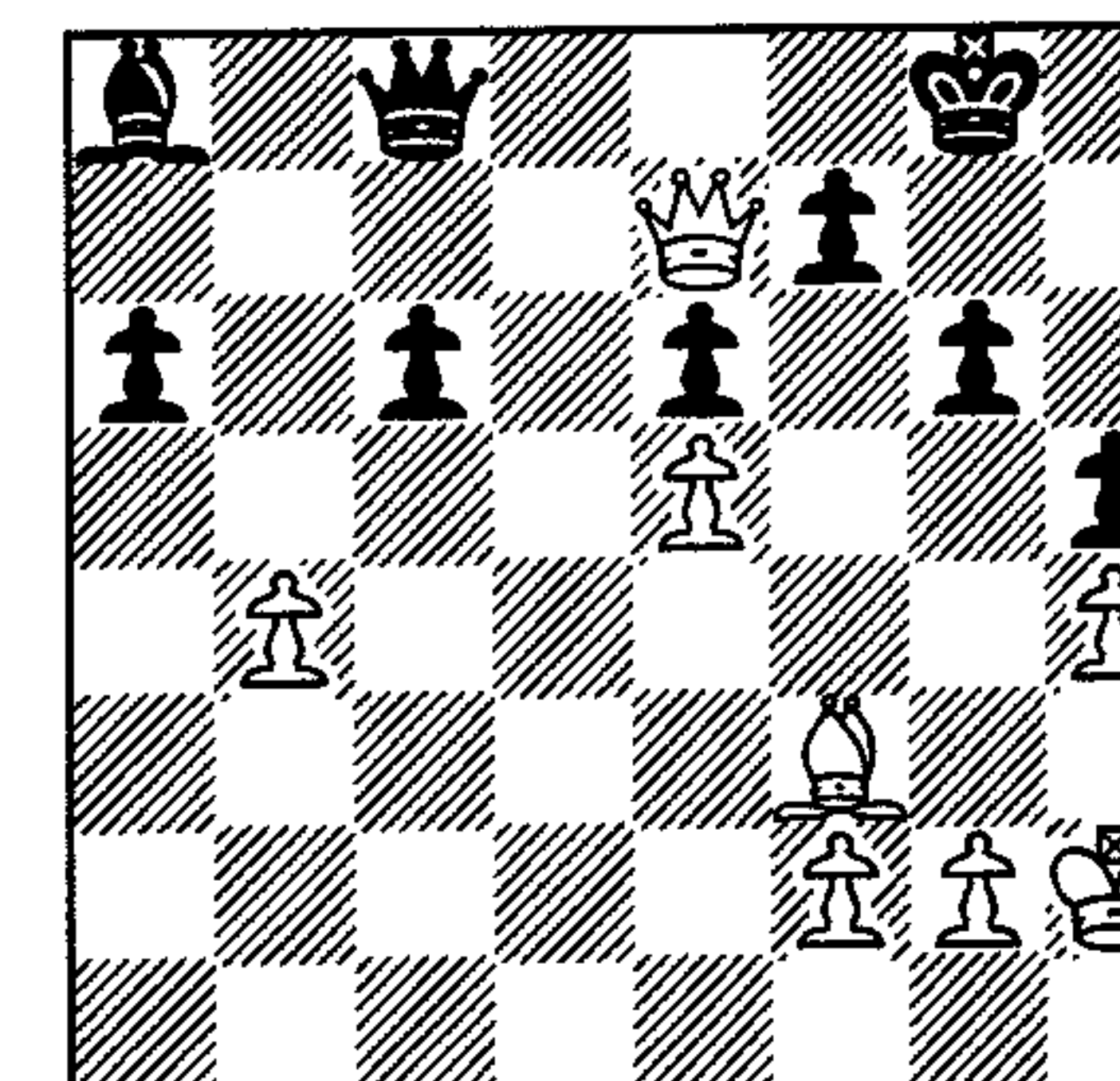
Exercise 73: White to move



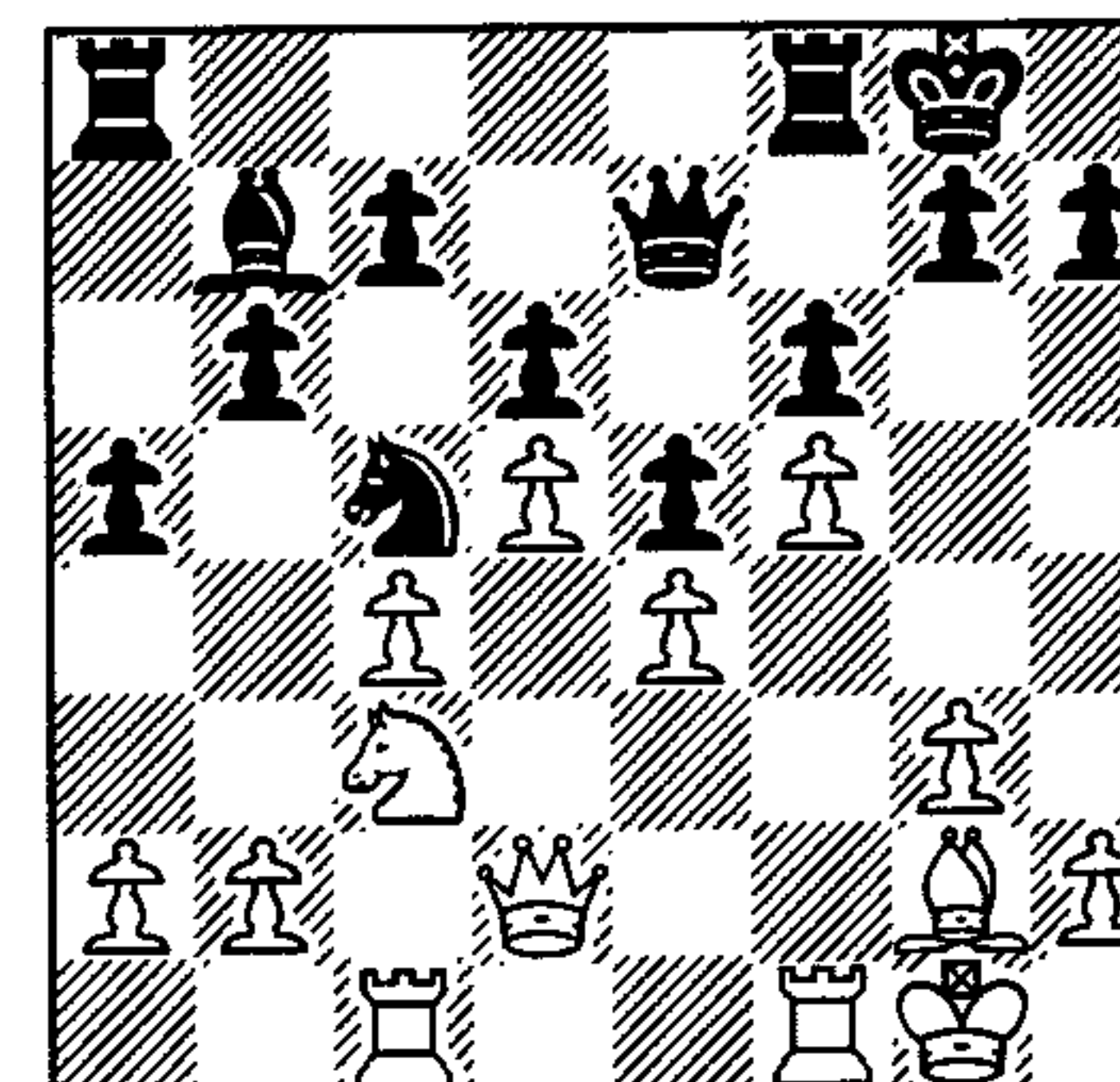
Exercise 76: White to move



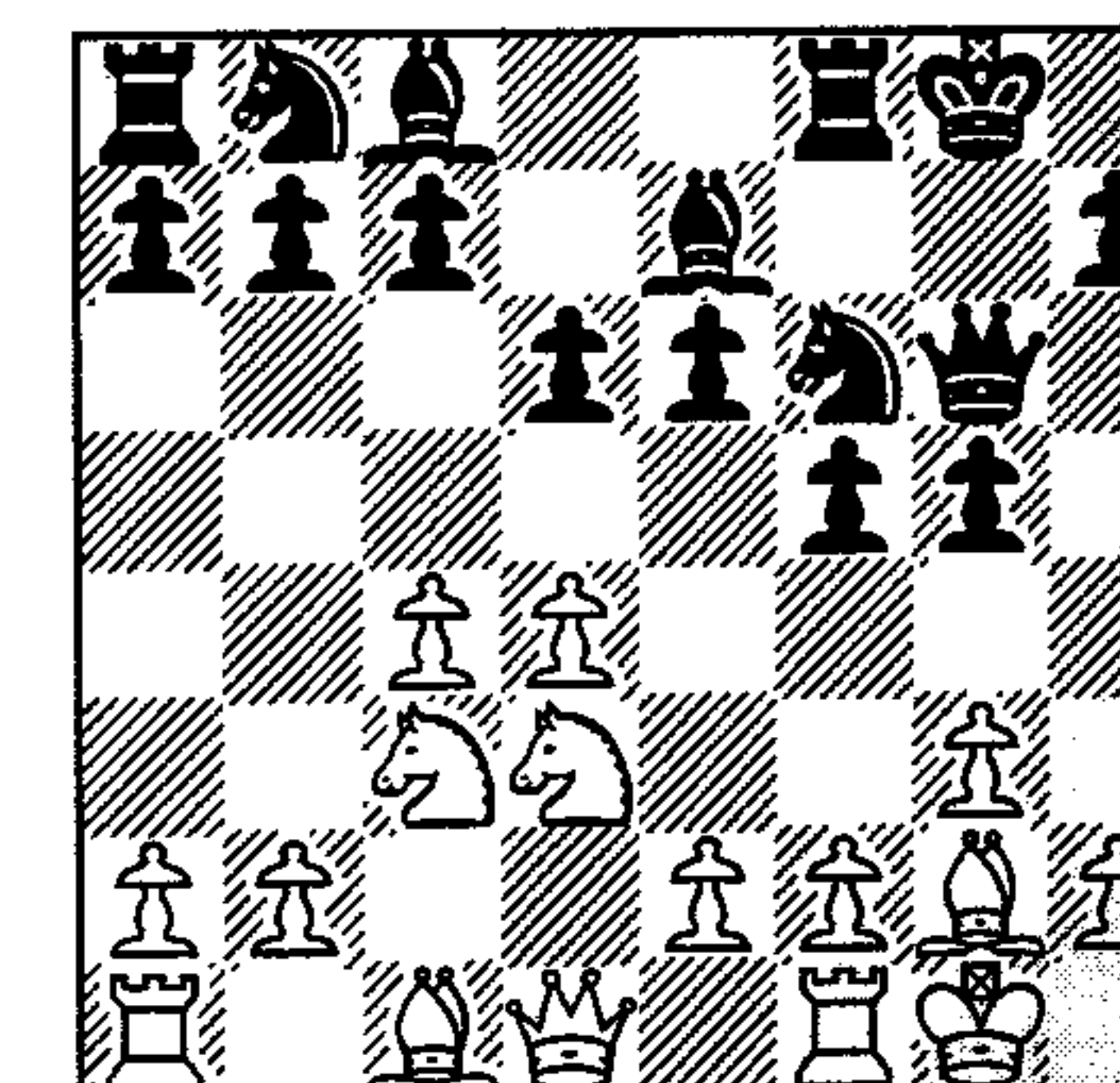
Exercise 74: Black to move



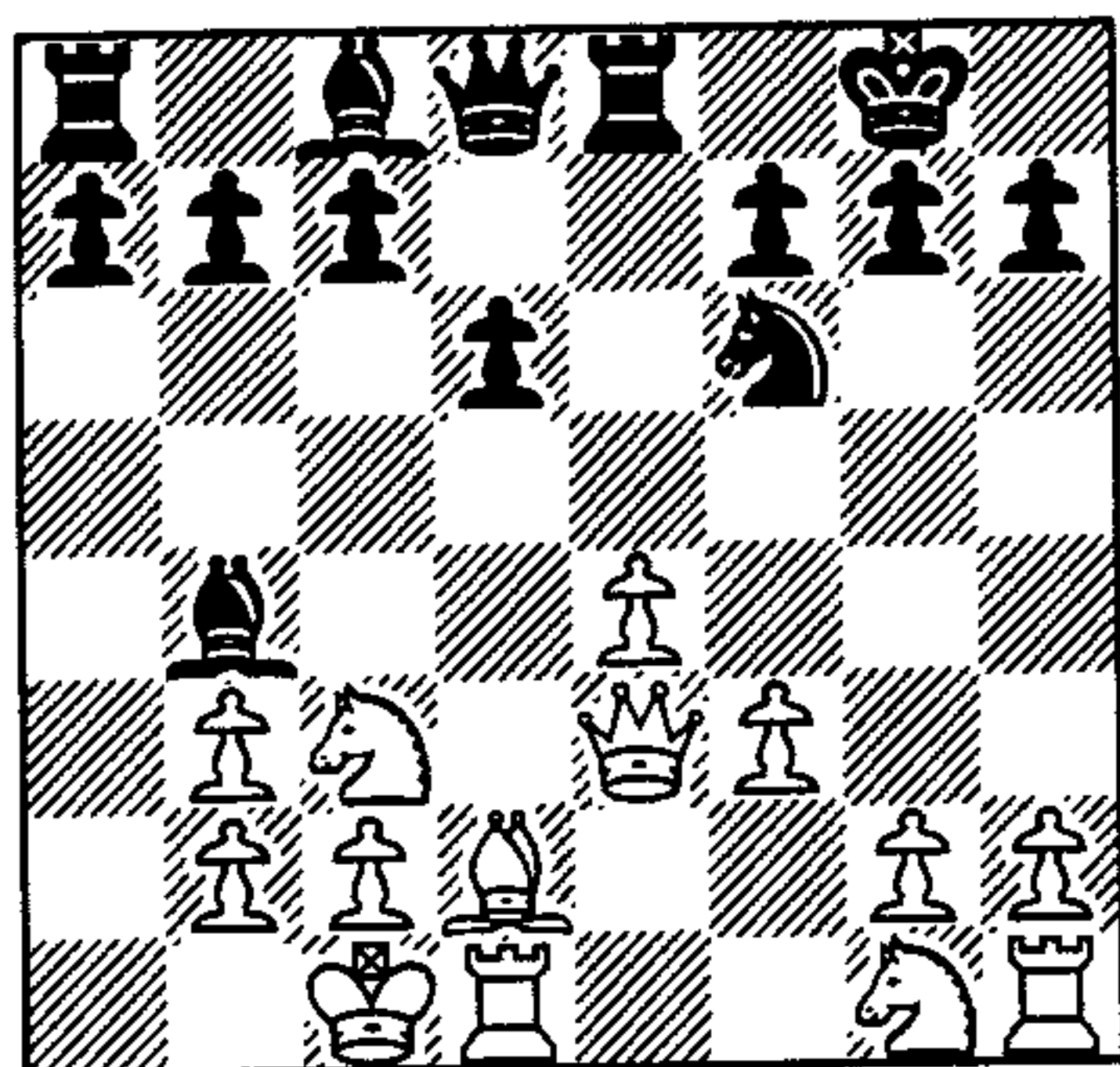
Exercise 77: White to move



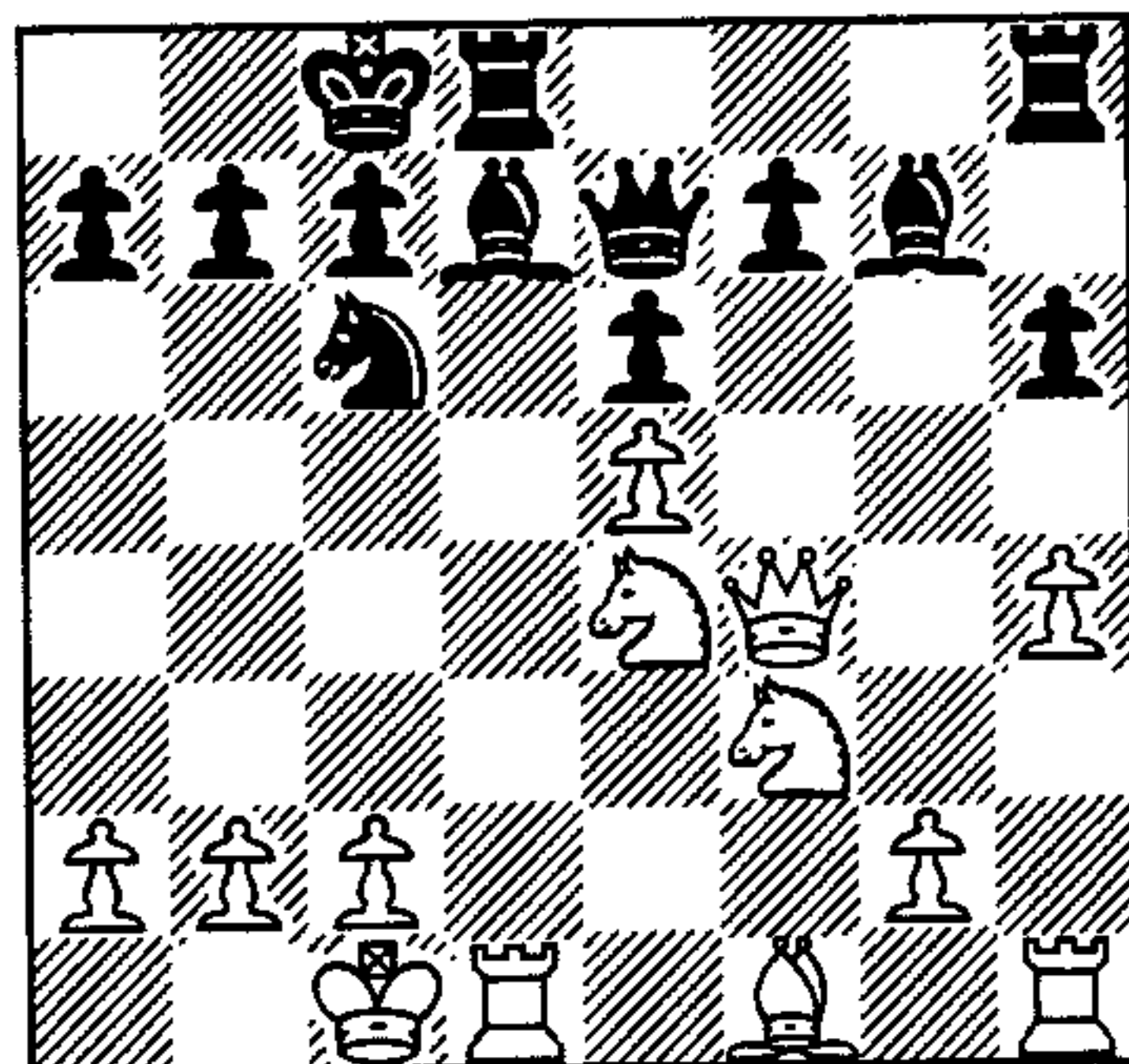
Exercise 75: White to move



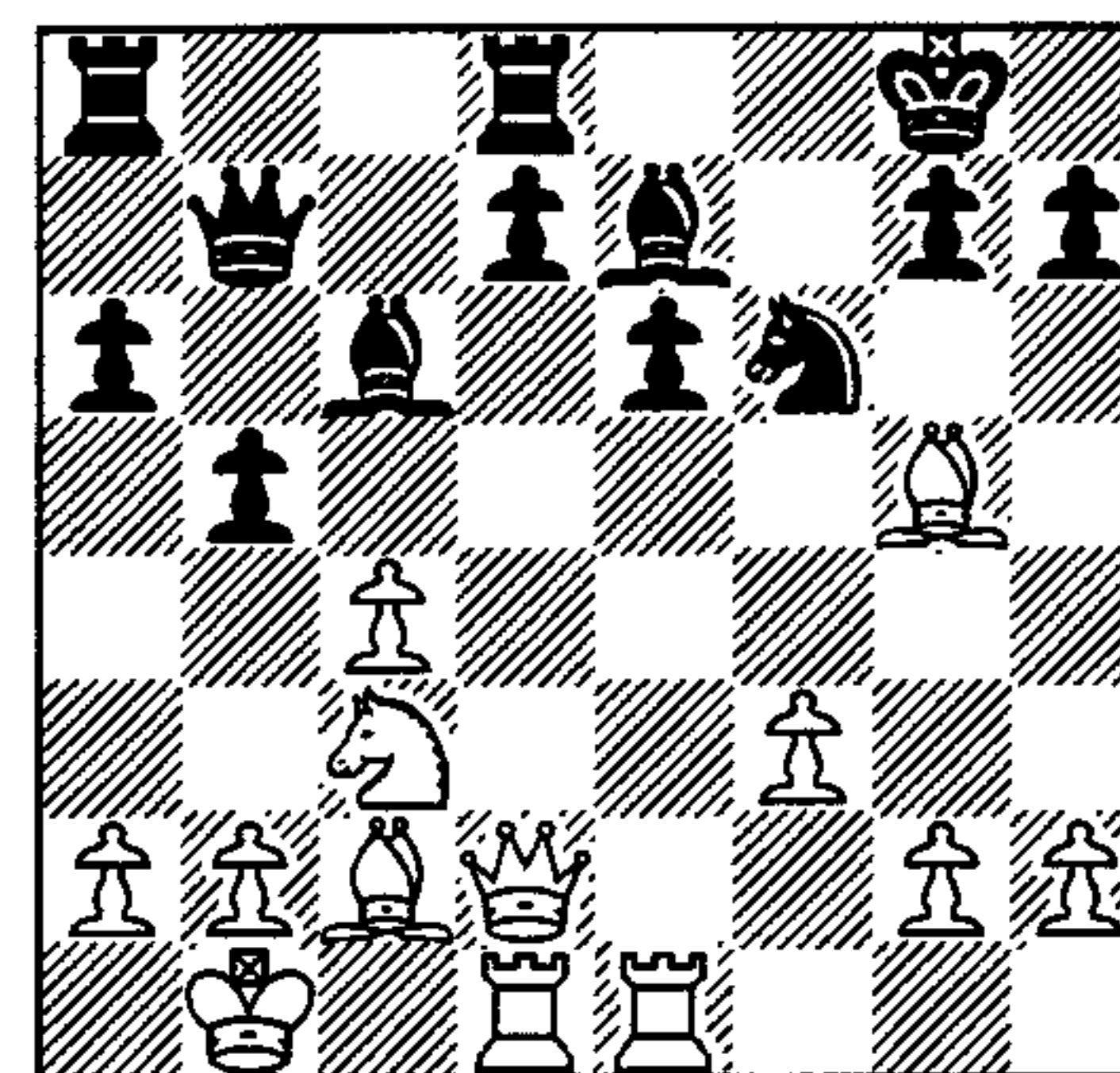
Exercise 78: White to move



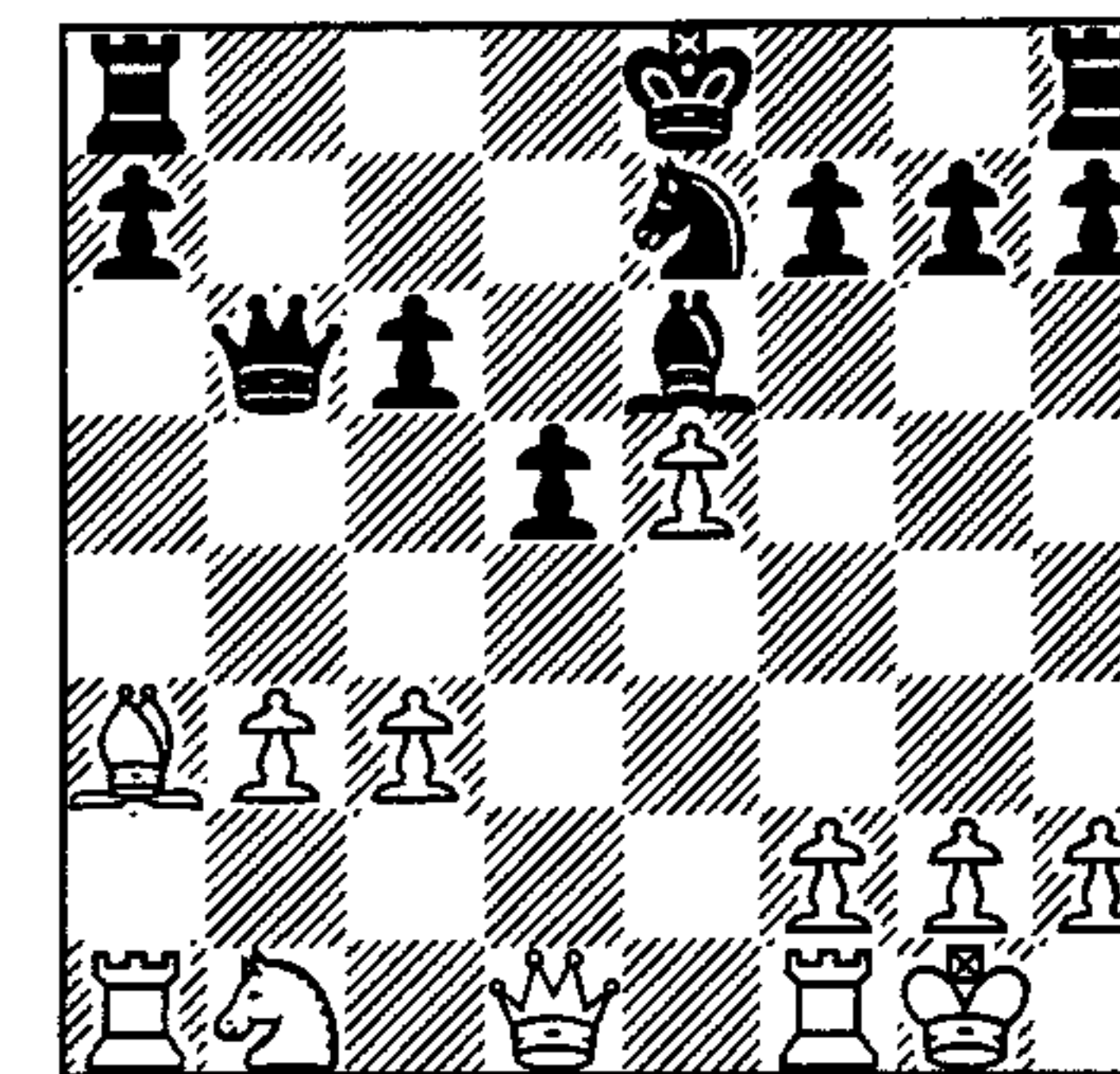
Exercise 79: Black to move



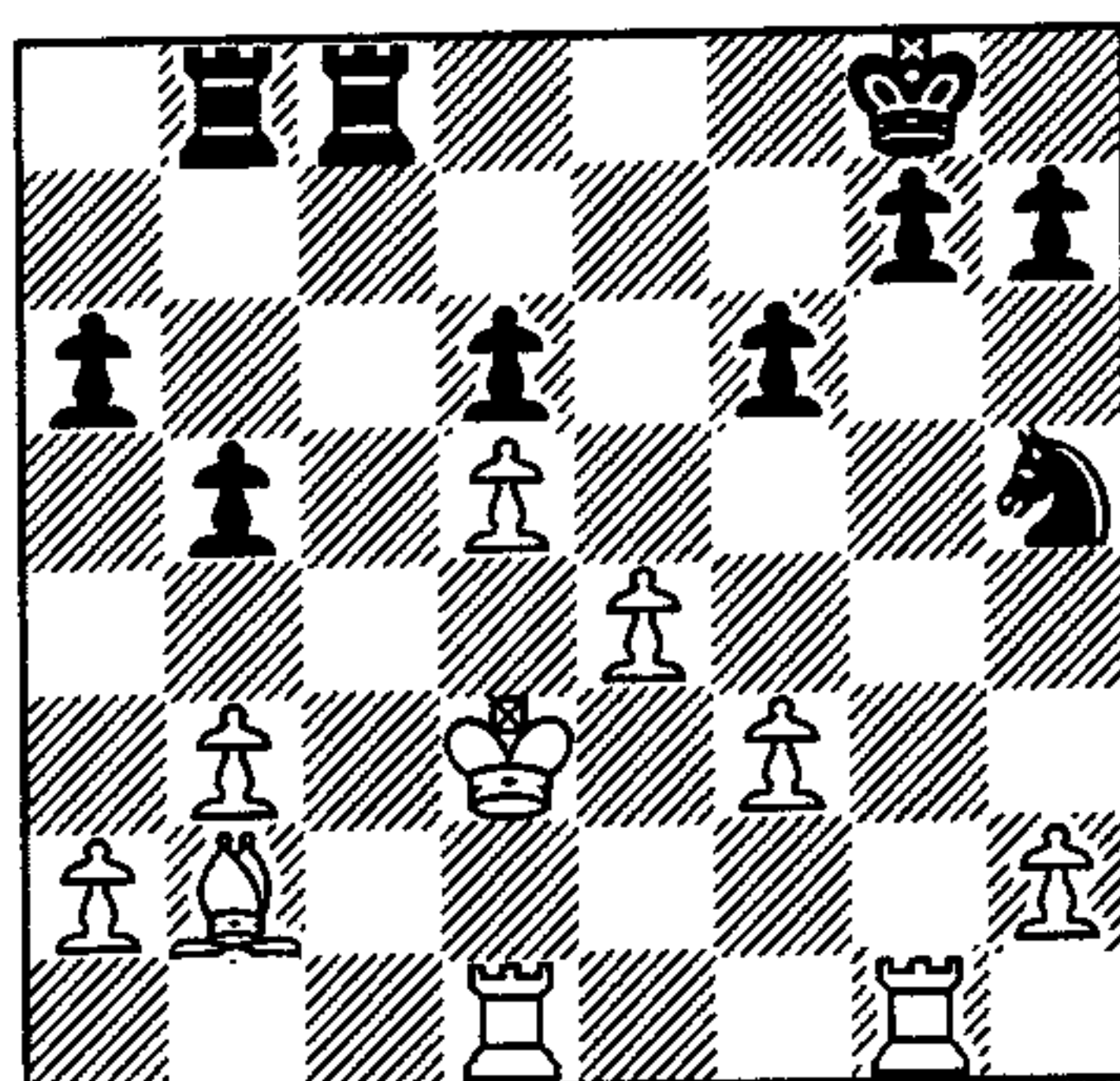
Exercise 82: Black to move



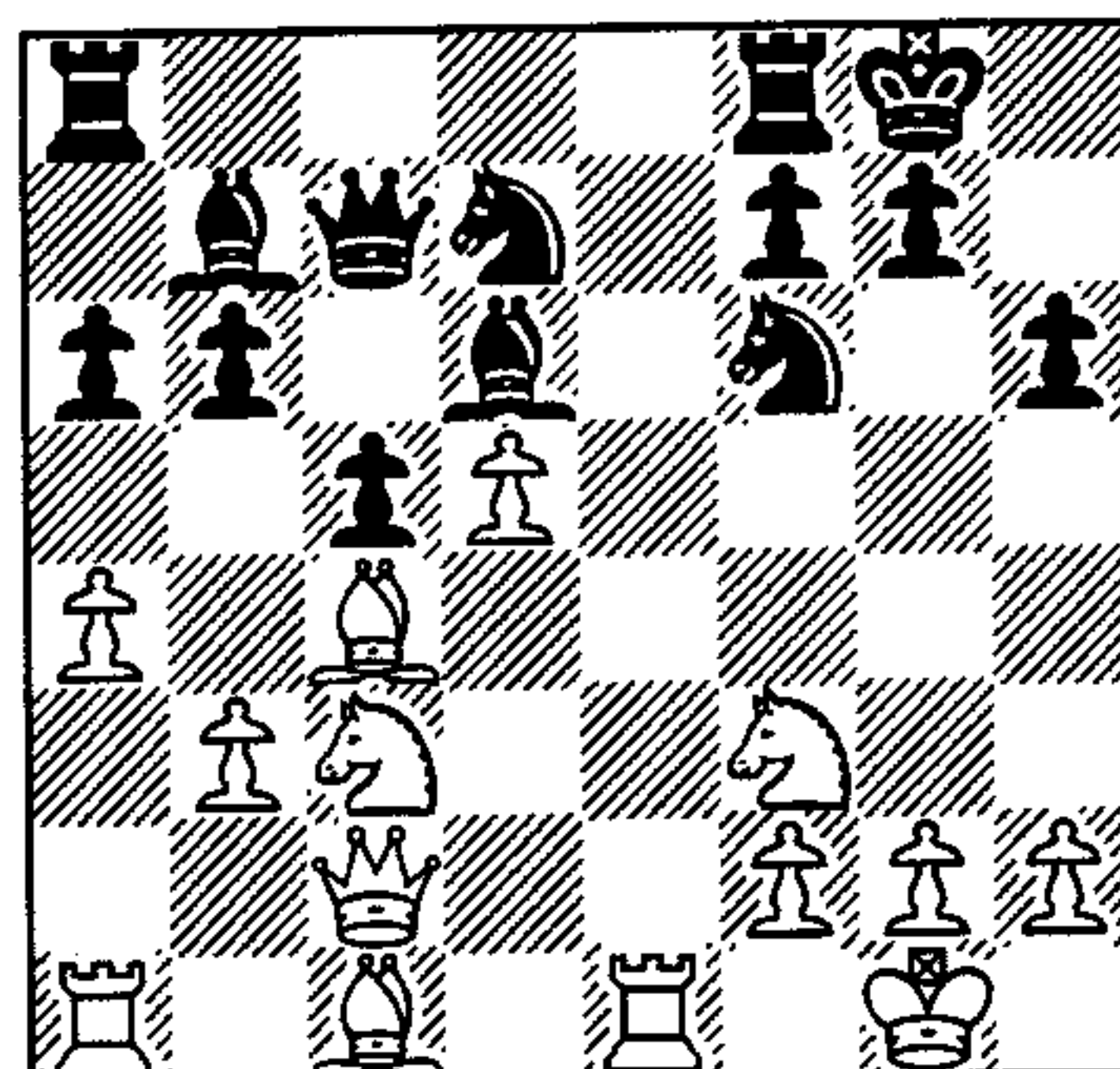
Exercise 85: White to move



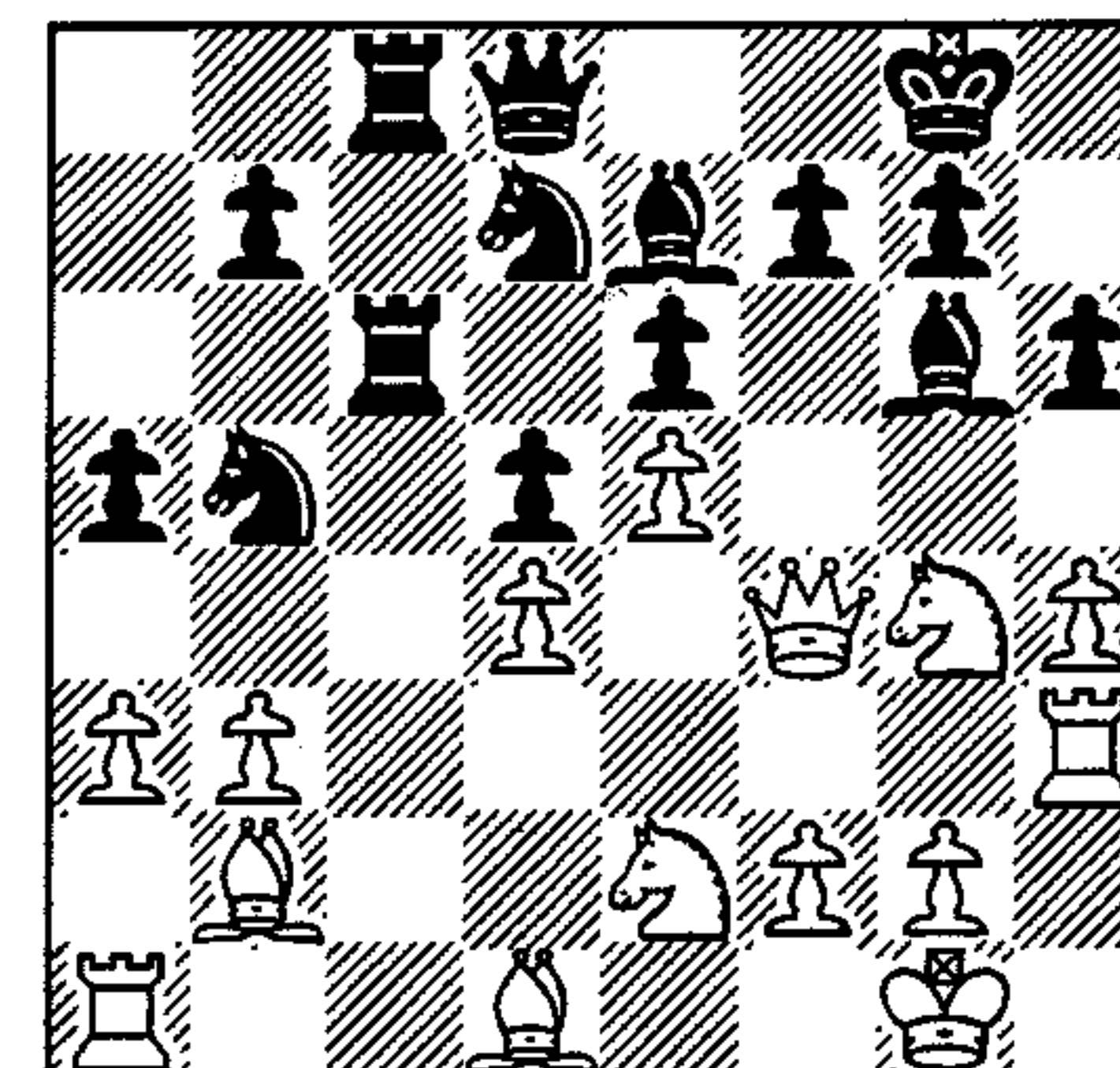
Exercise 88: White to move



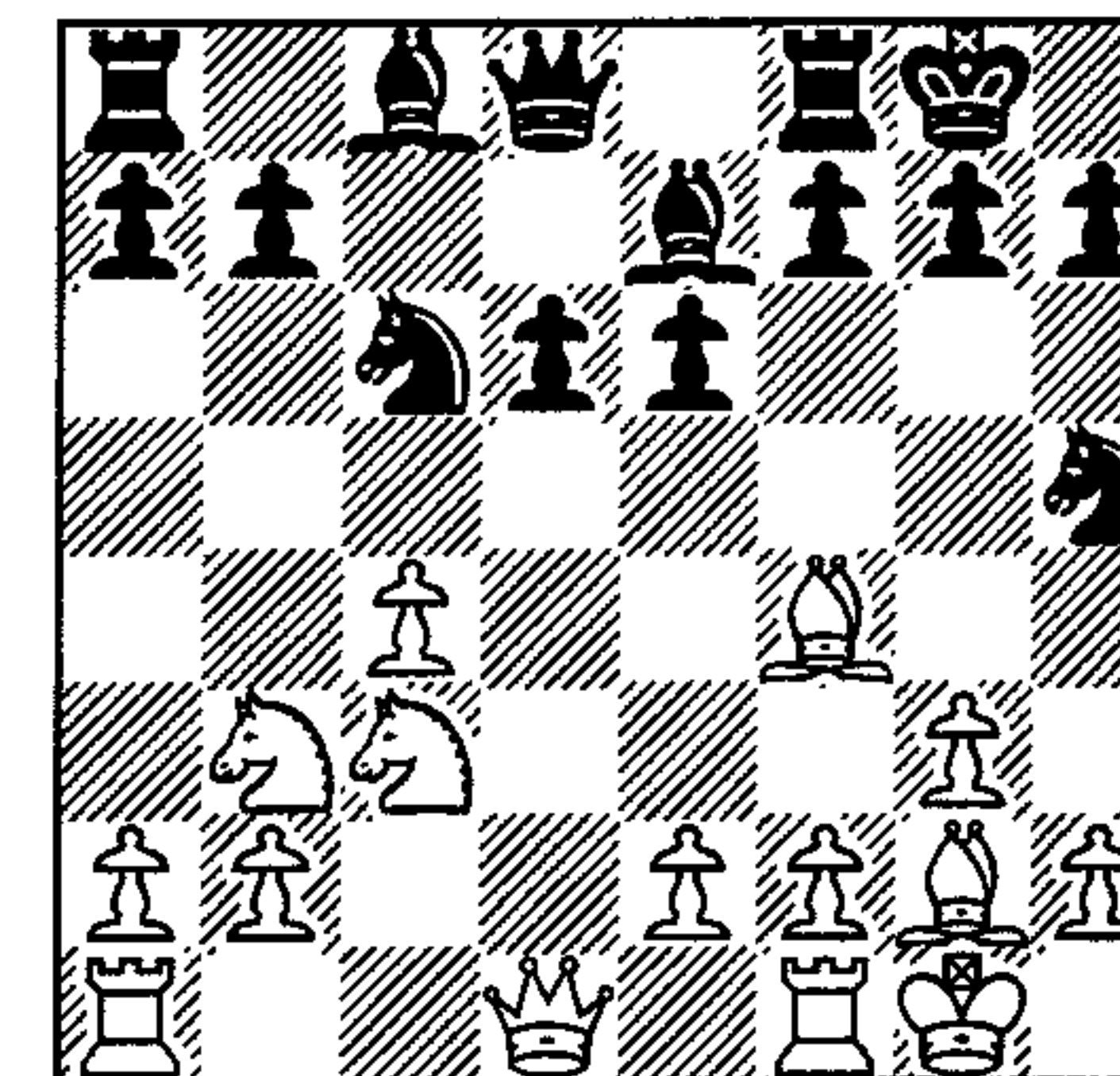
Exercise 80: White to move



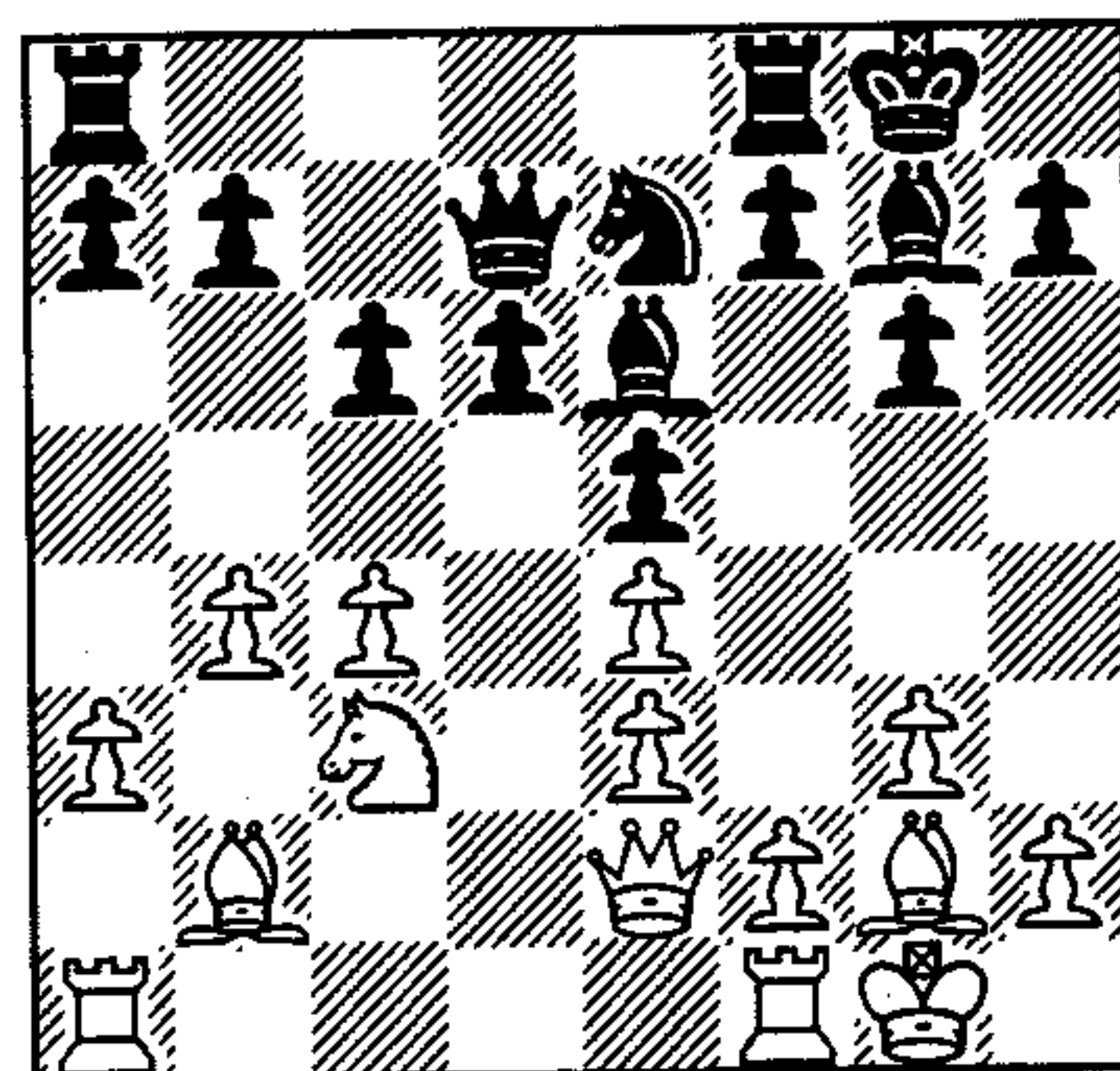
Exercise 83: White to move



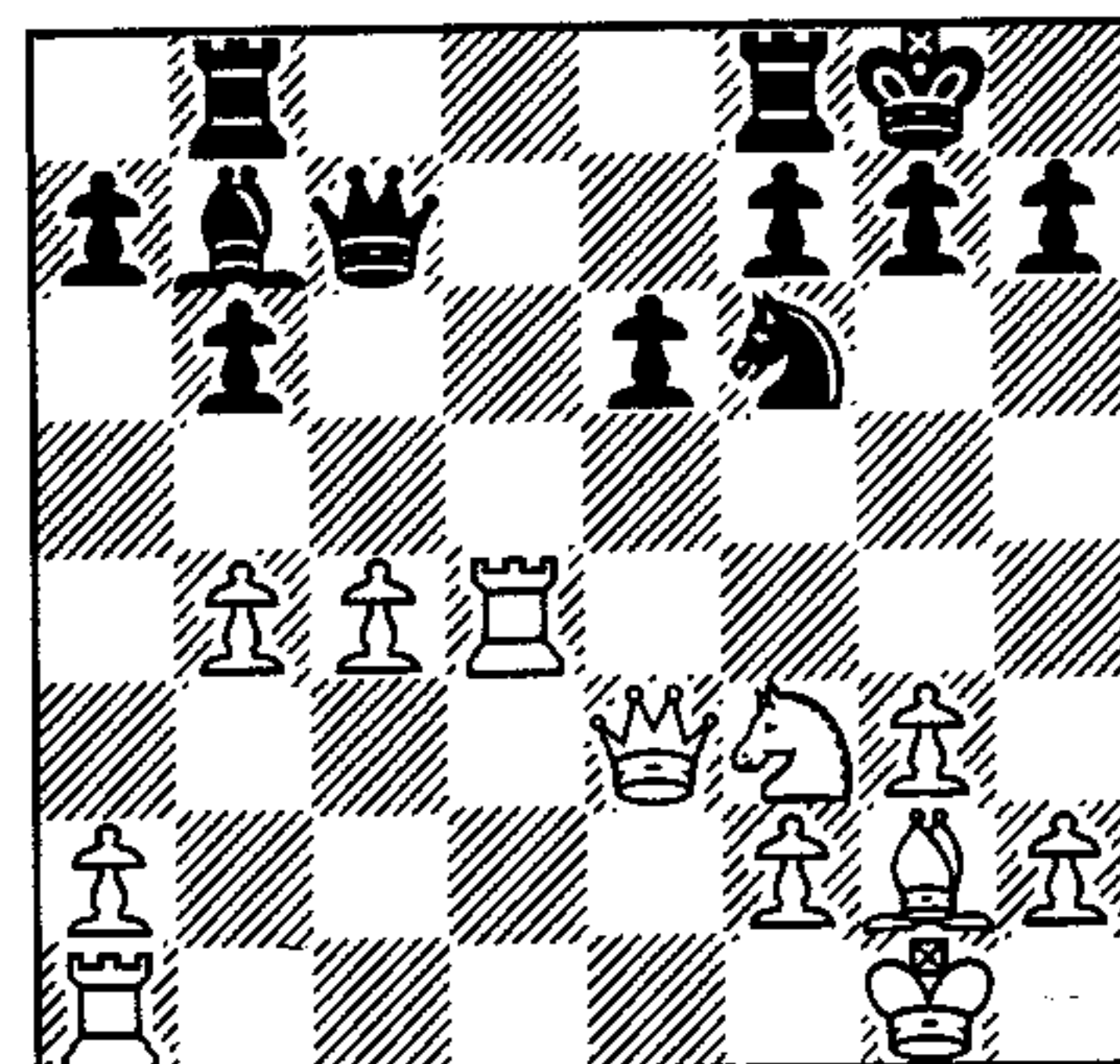
Exercise 86: Black to move



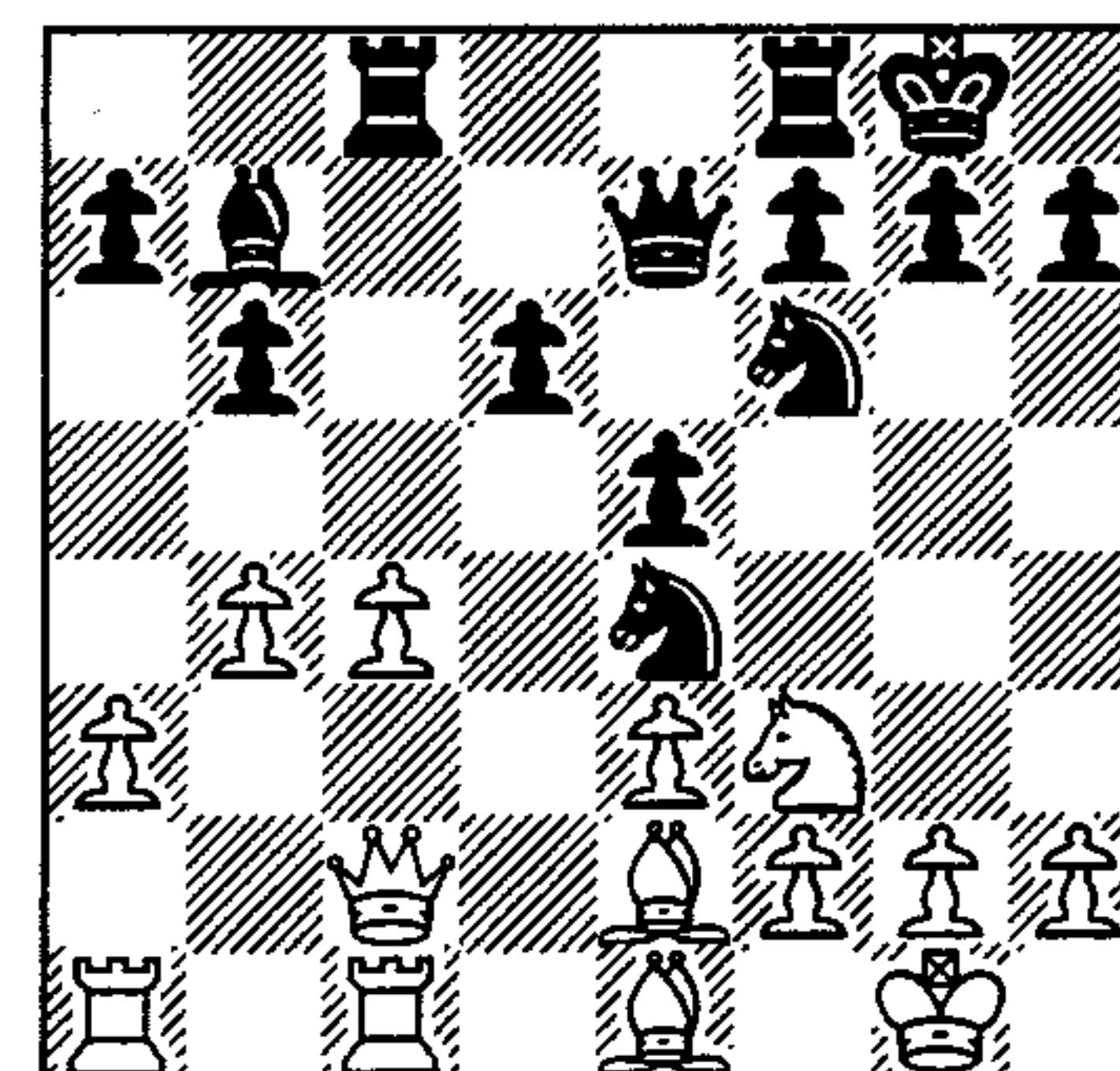
Exercise 89: White to move



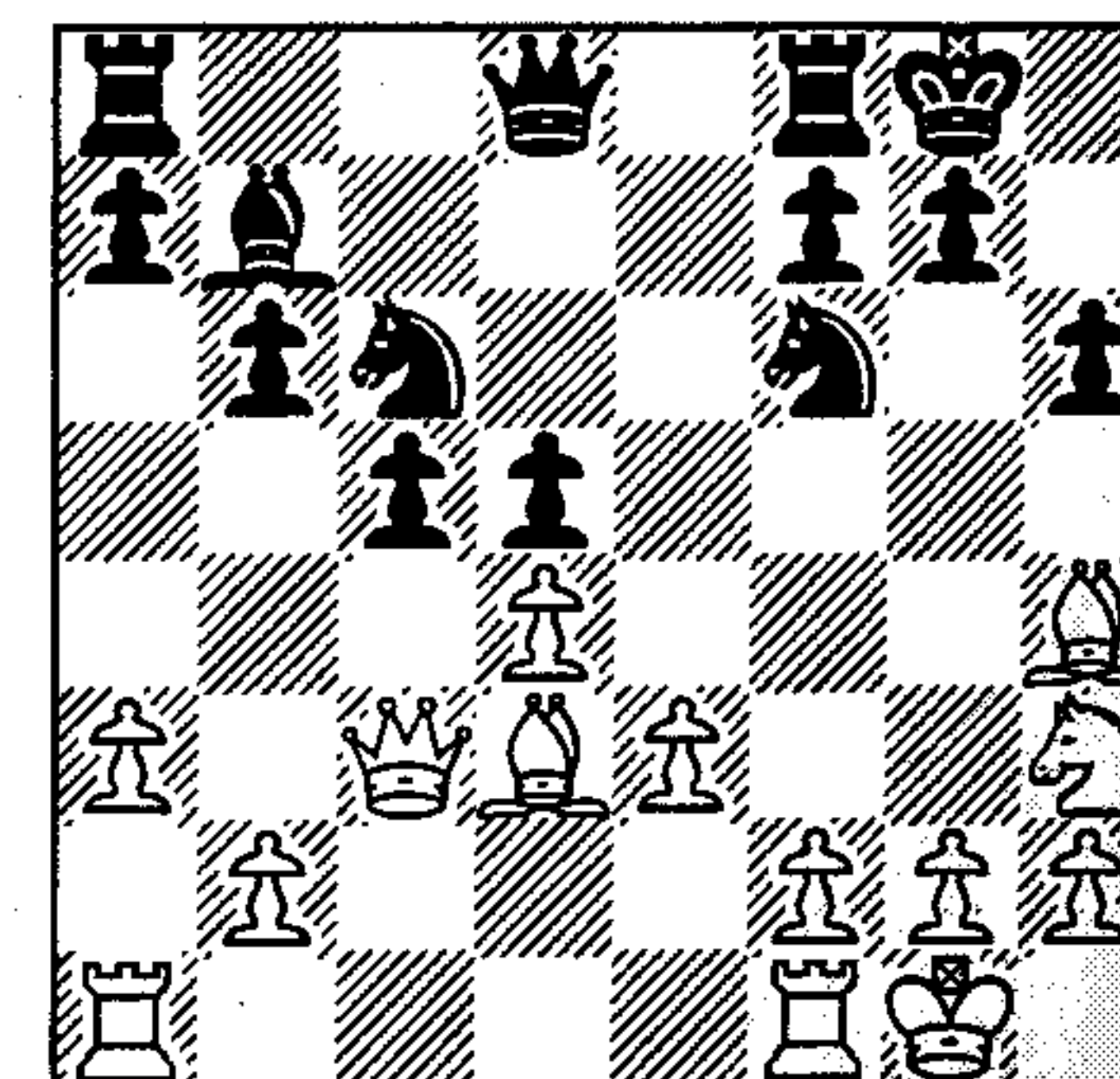
Exercise 81: Black to move



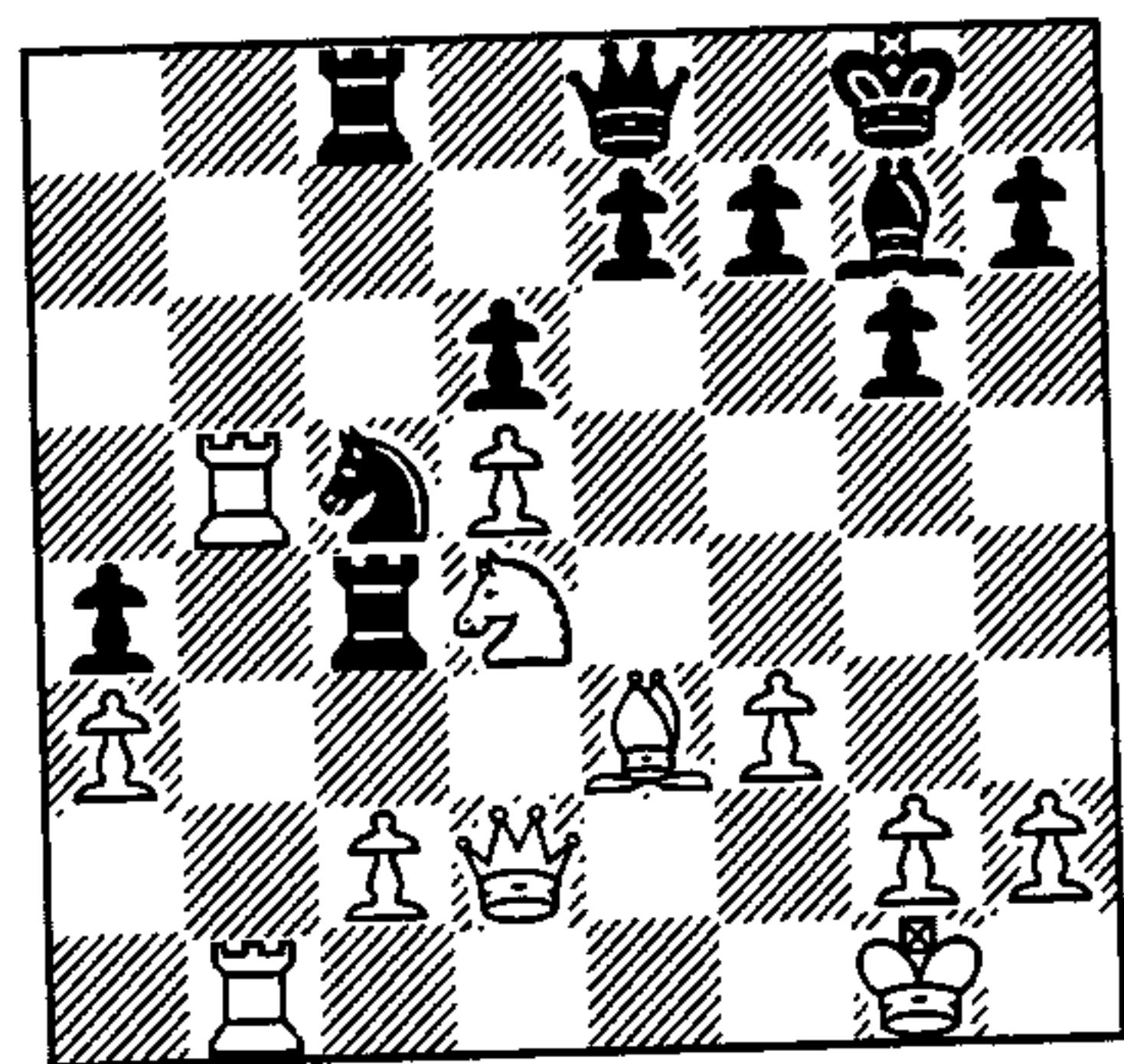
Exercise 84: White to move



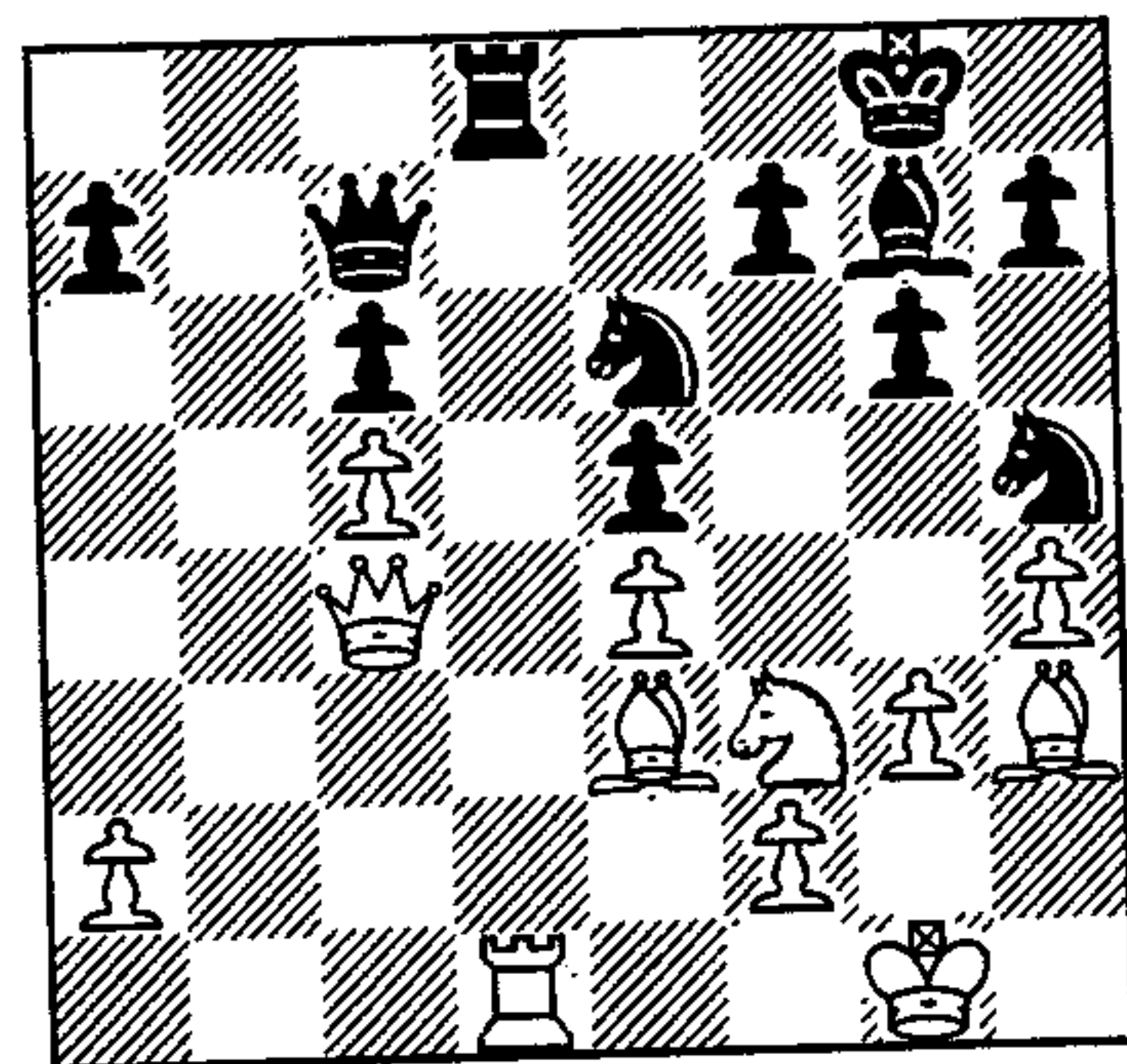
Exercise 87: Black to move



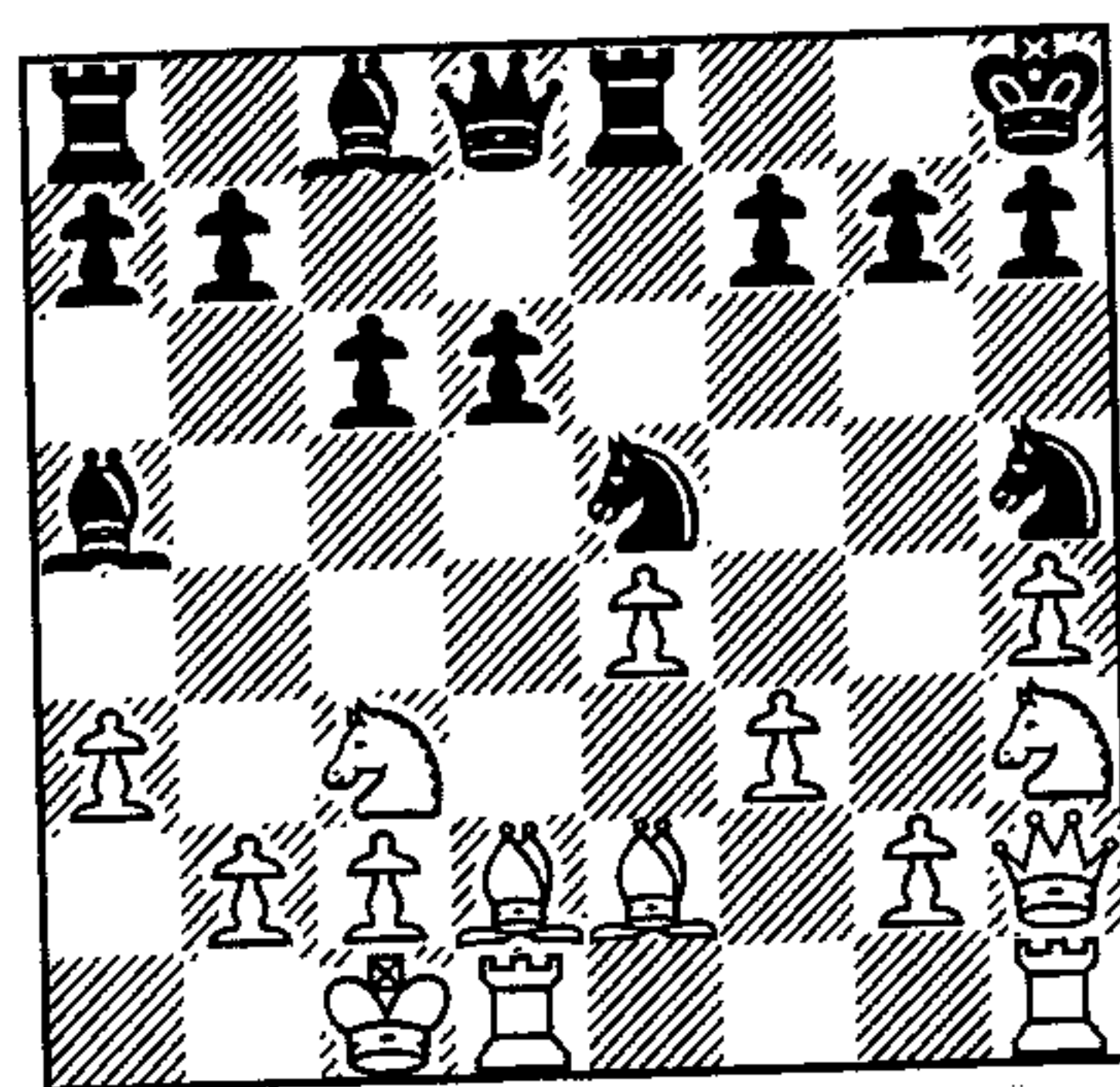
Exercise 90: Black to move



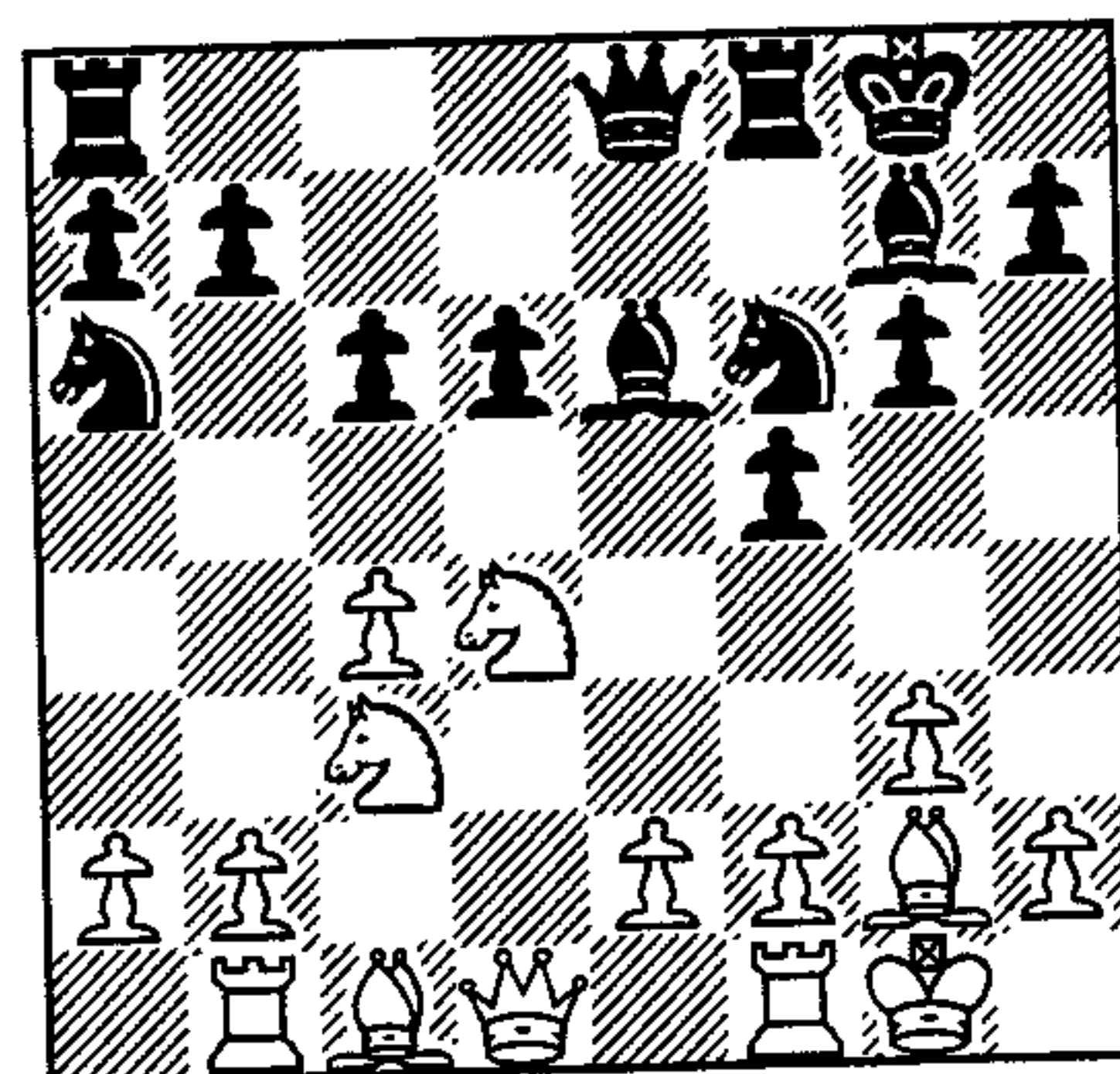
Exercise 91: Black to move



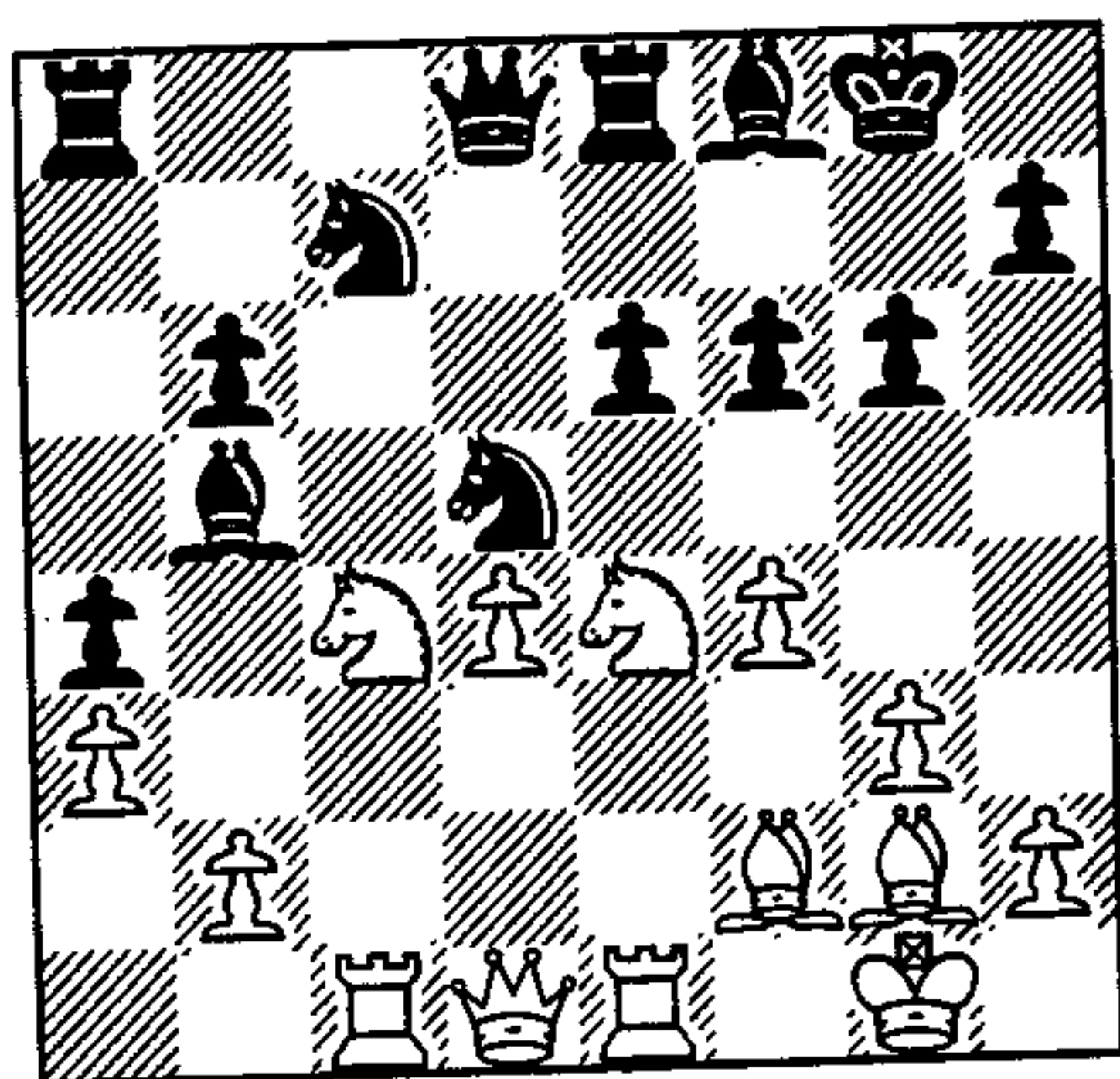
Exercise 94: White to move



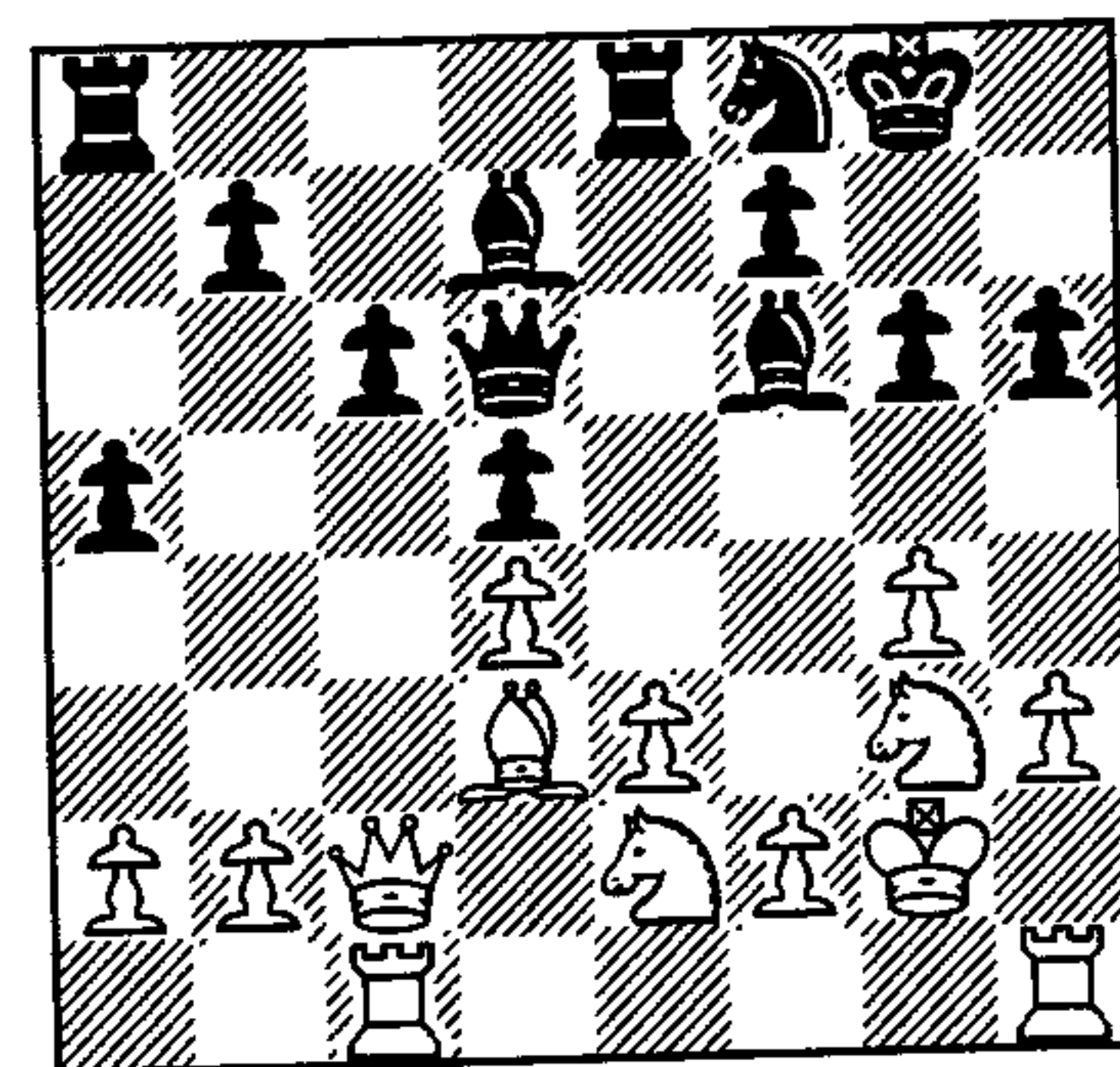
Exercise 92: Black to move



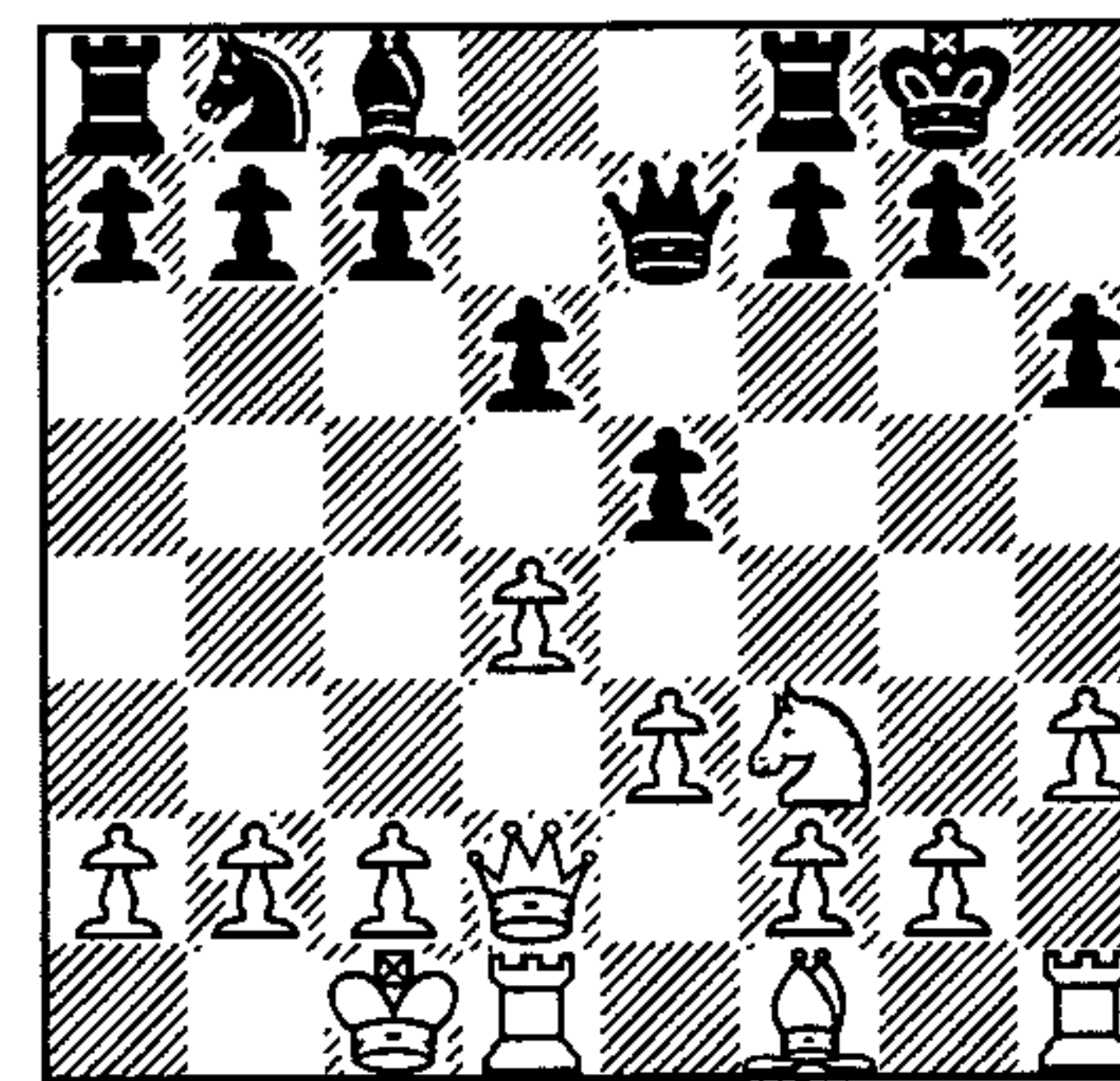
Exercise 95: White to move



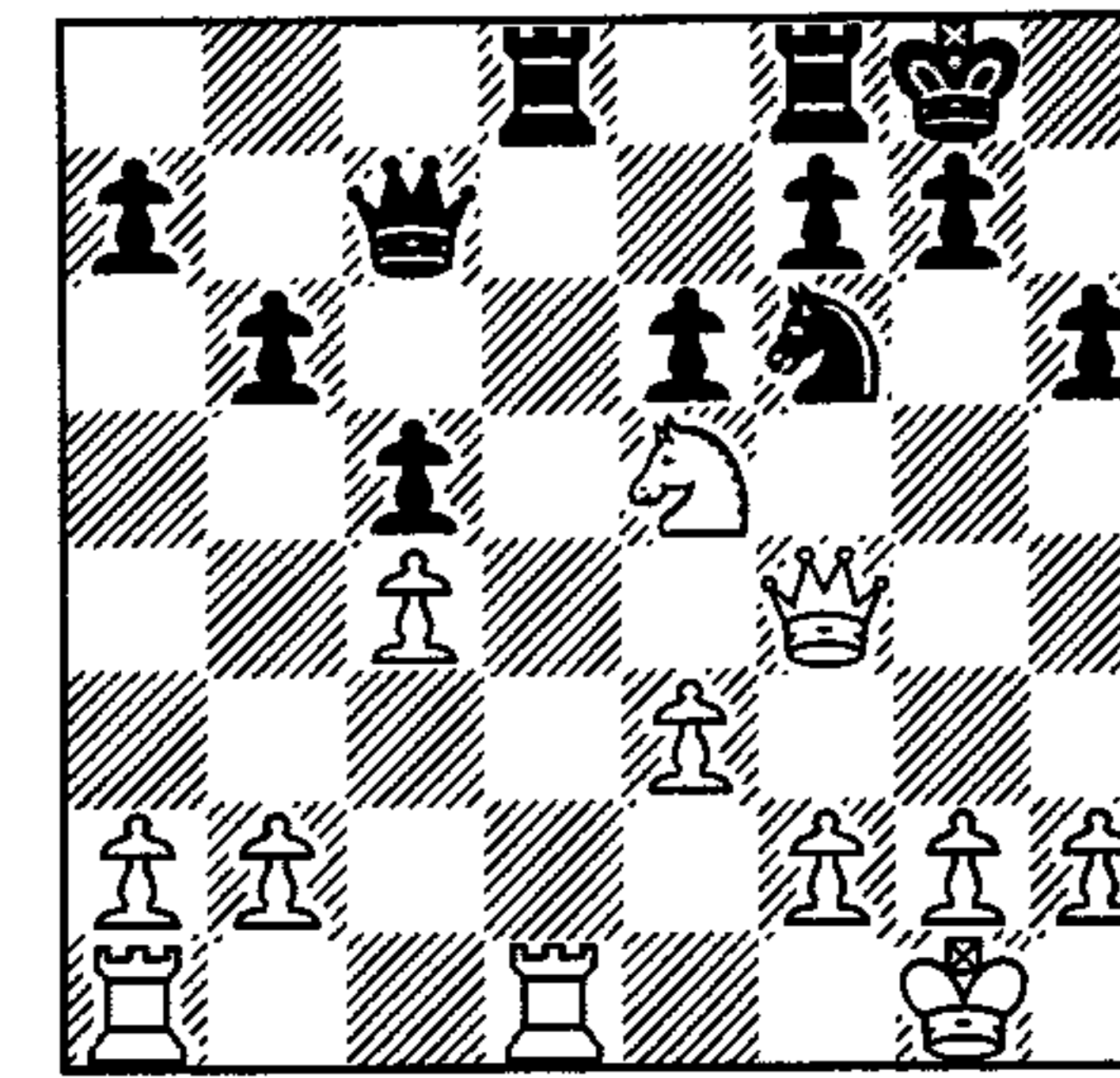
Exercise 93: White to move



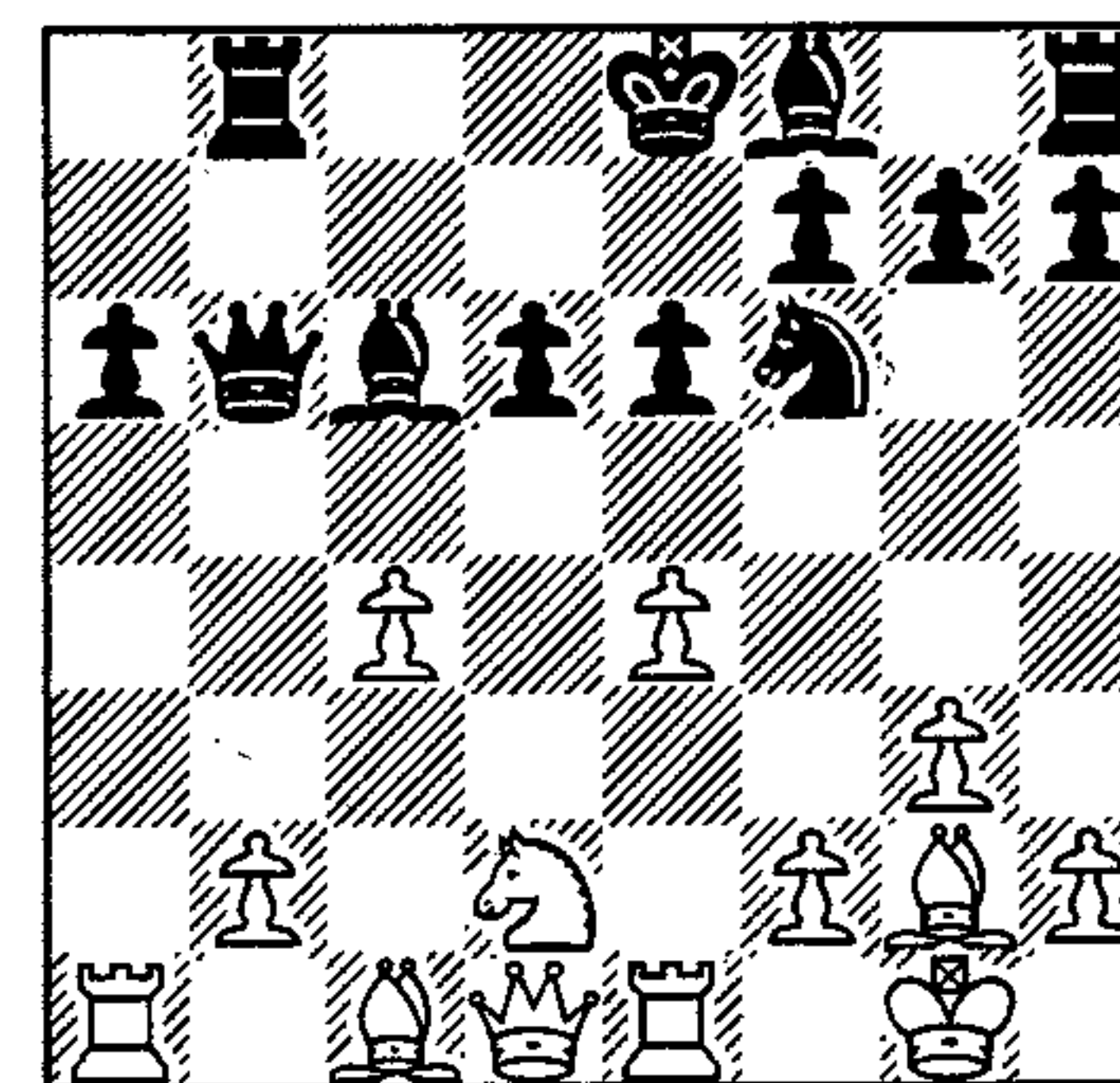
Exercise 96: Black to move



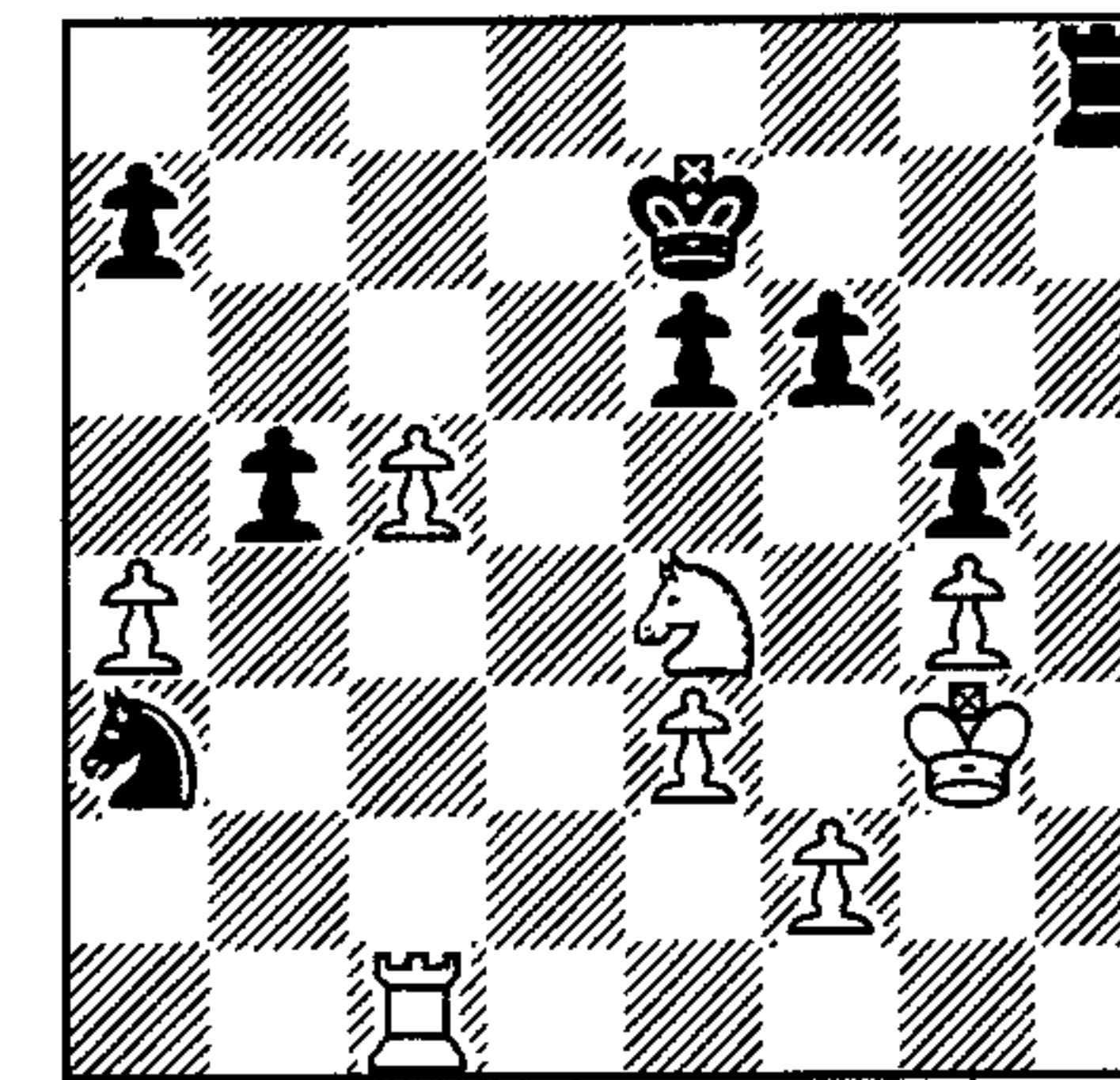
Exercise 97: White to move



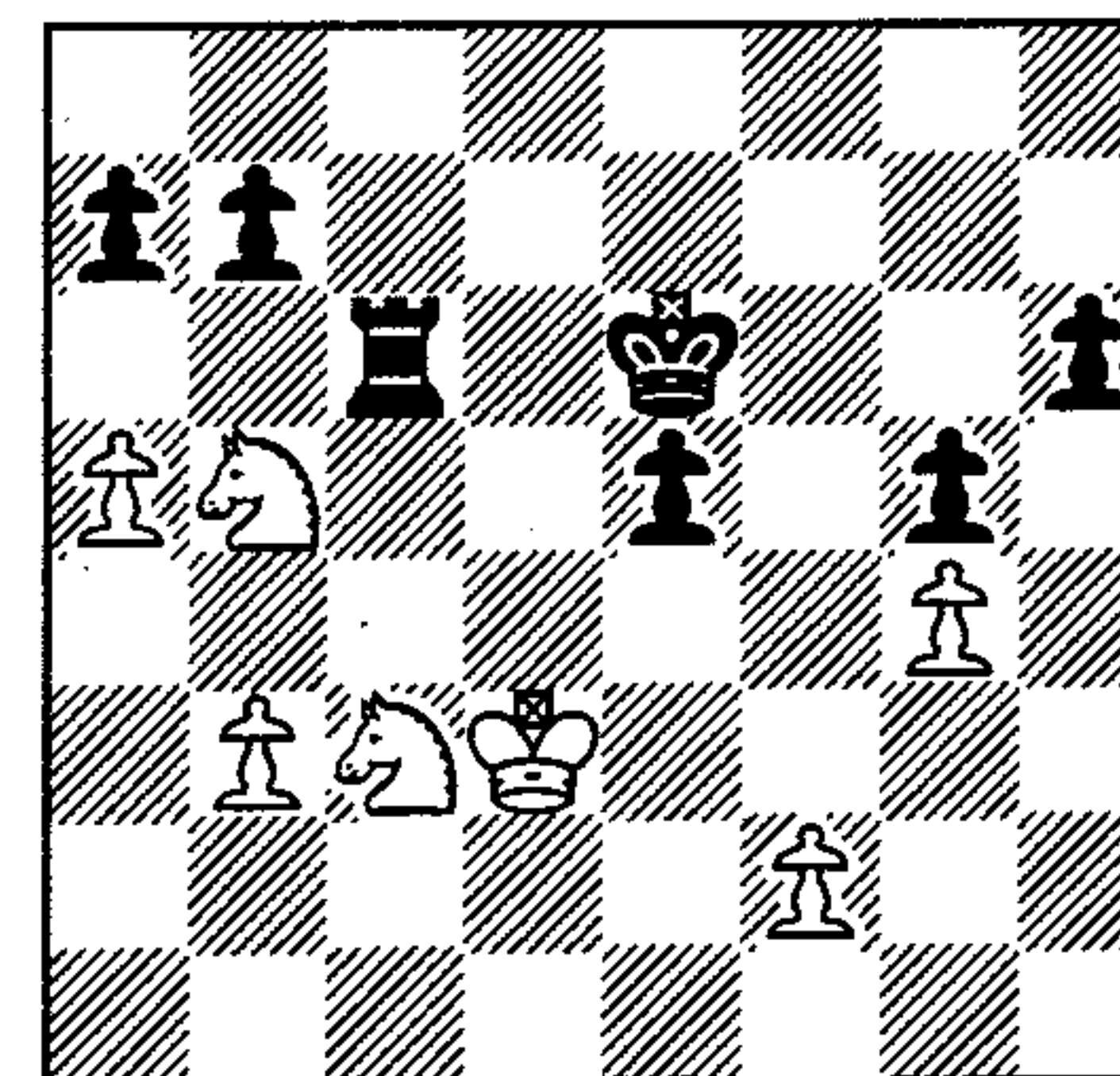
Exercise 100: White to move



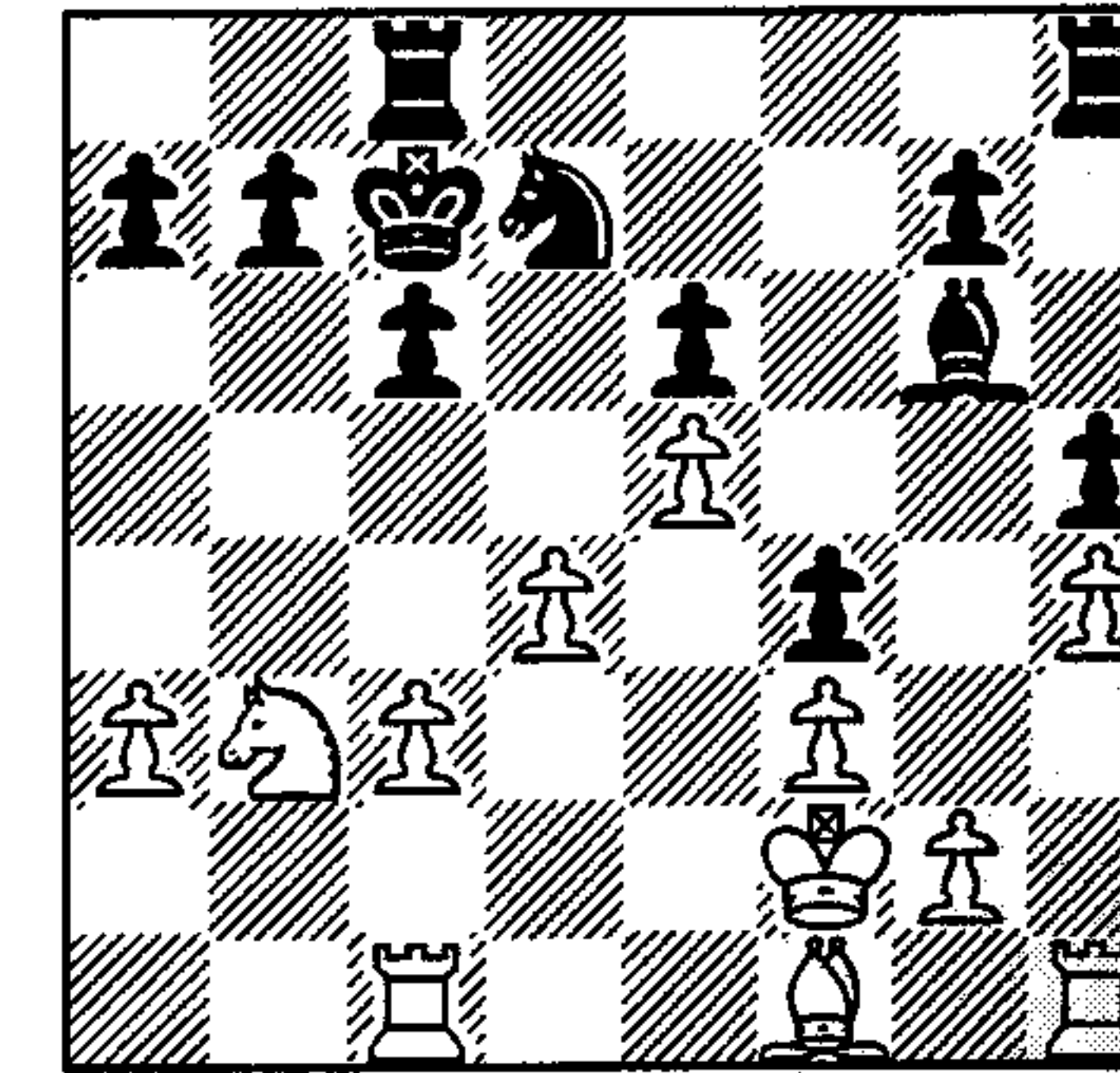
Exercise 98: White to move



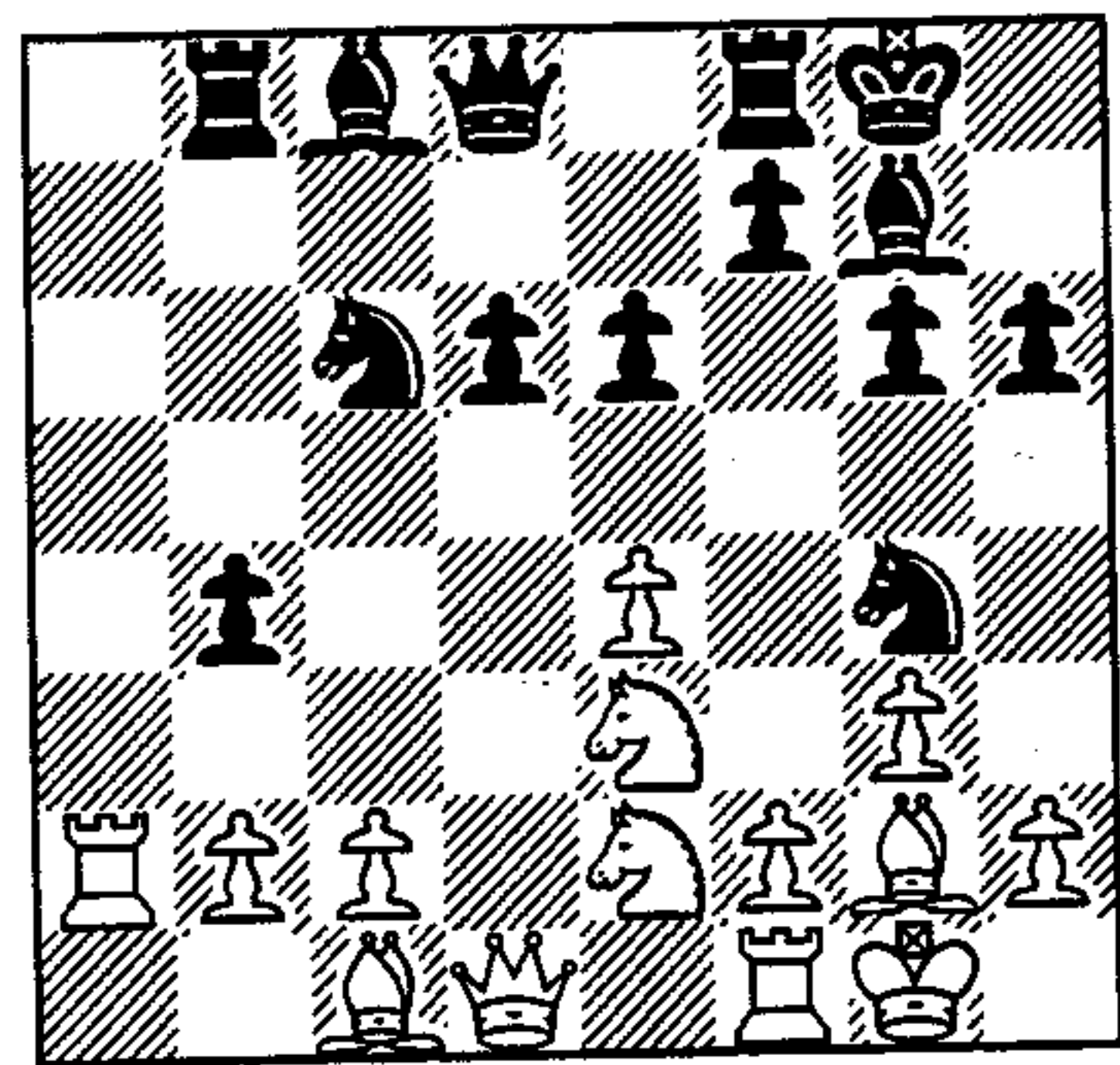
Exercise 101: White to move



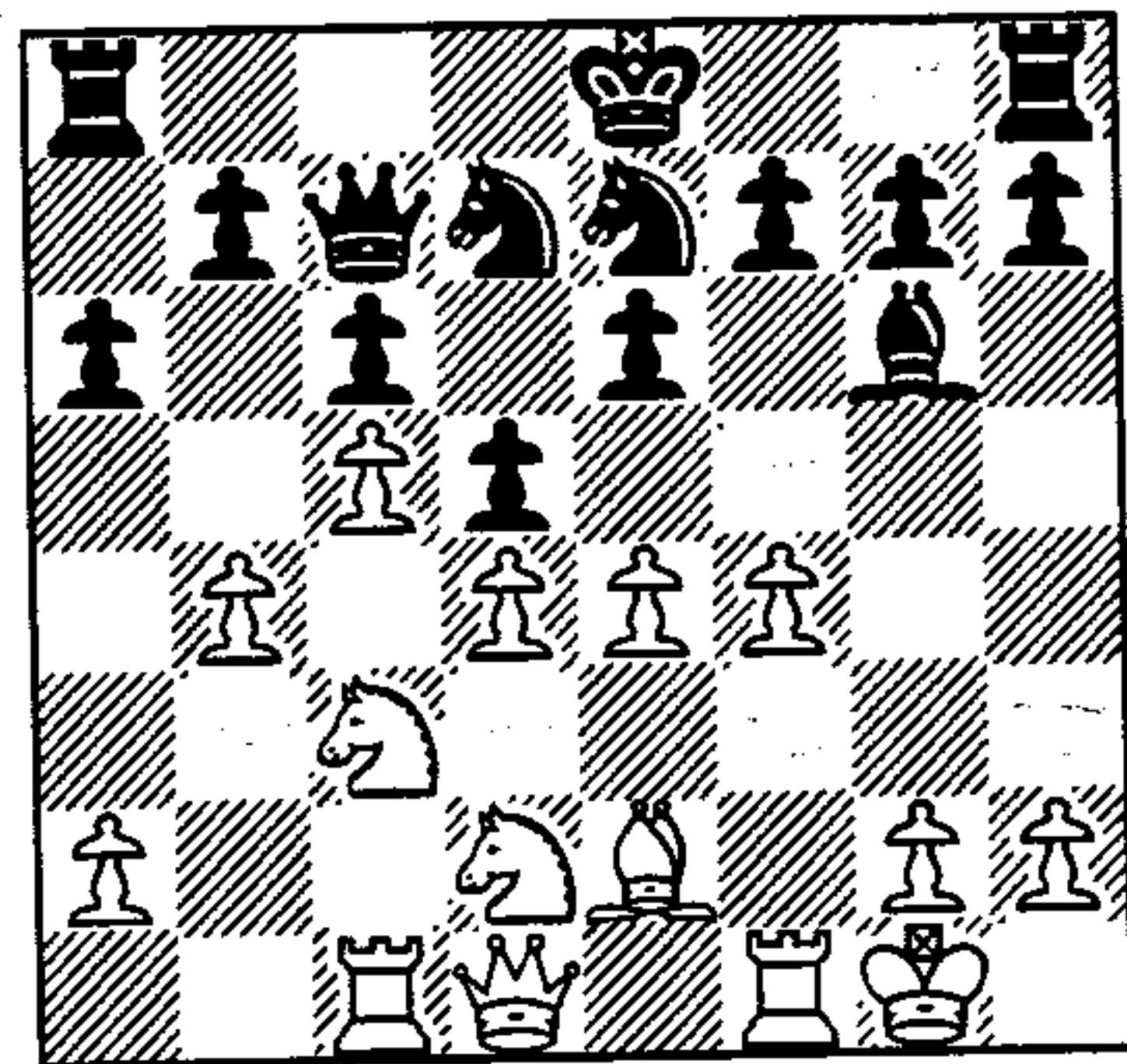
Exercise 99: White to move



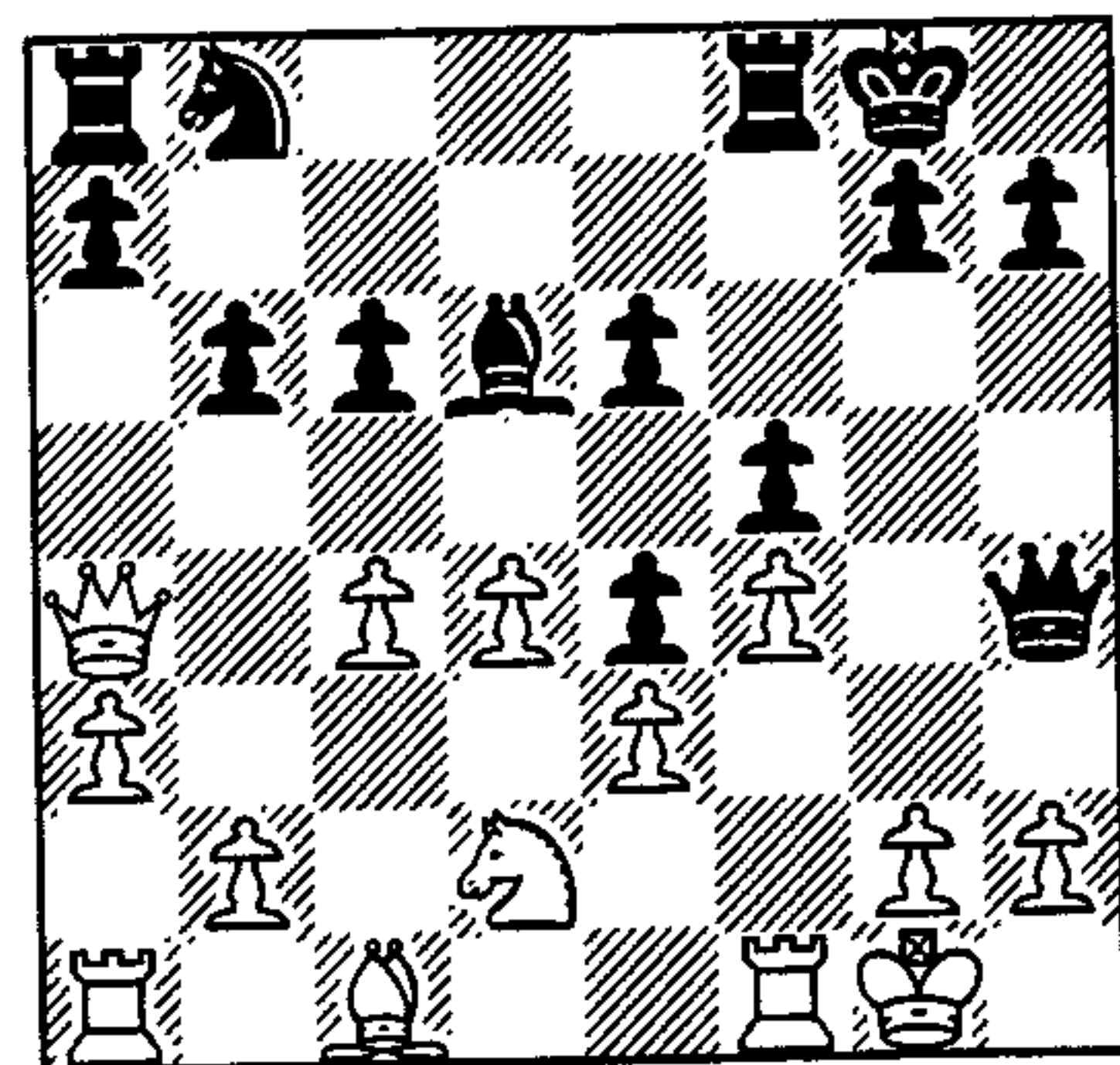
Exercise 102: White to move



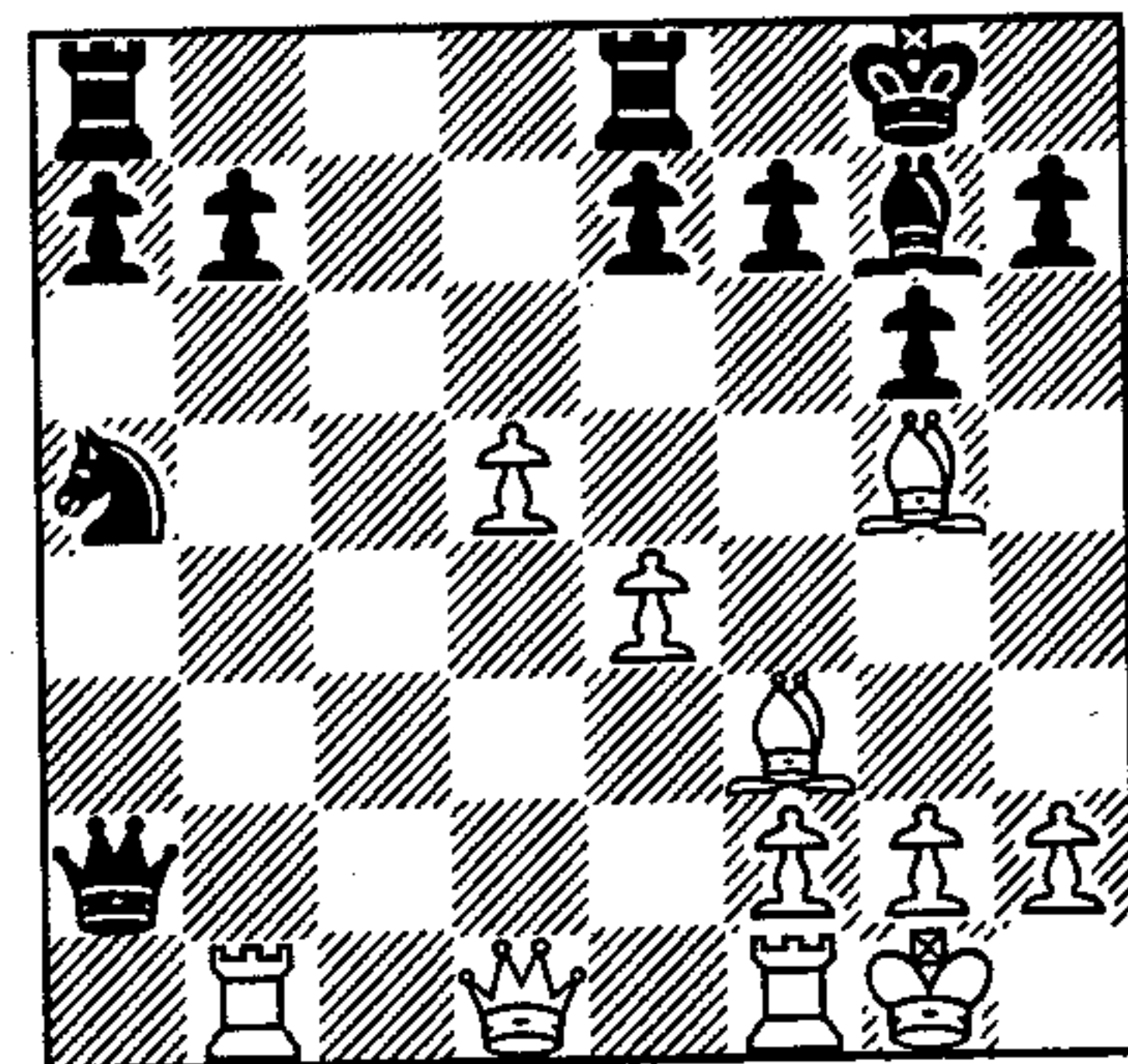
Exercise 103: Black to move



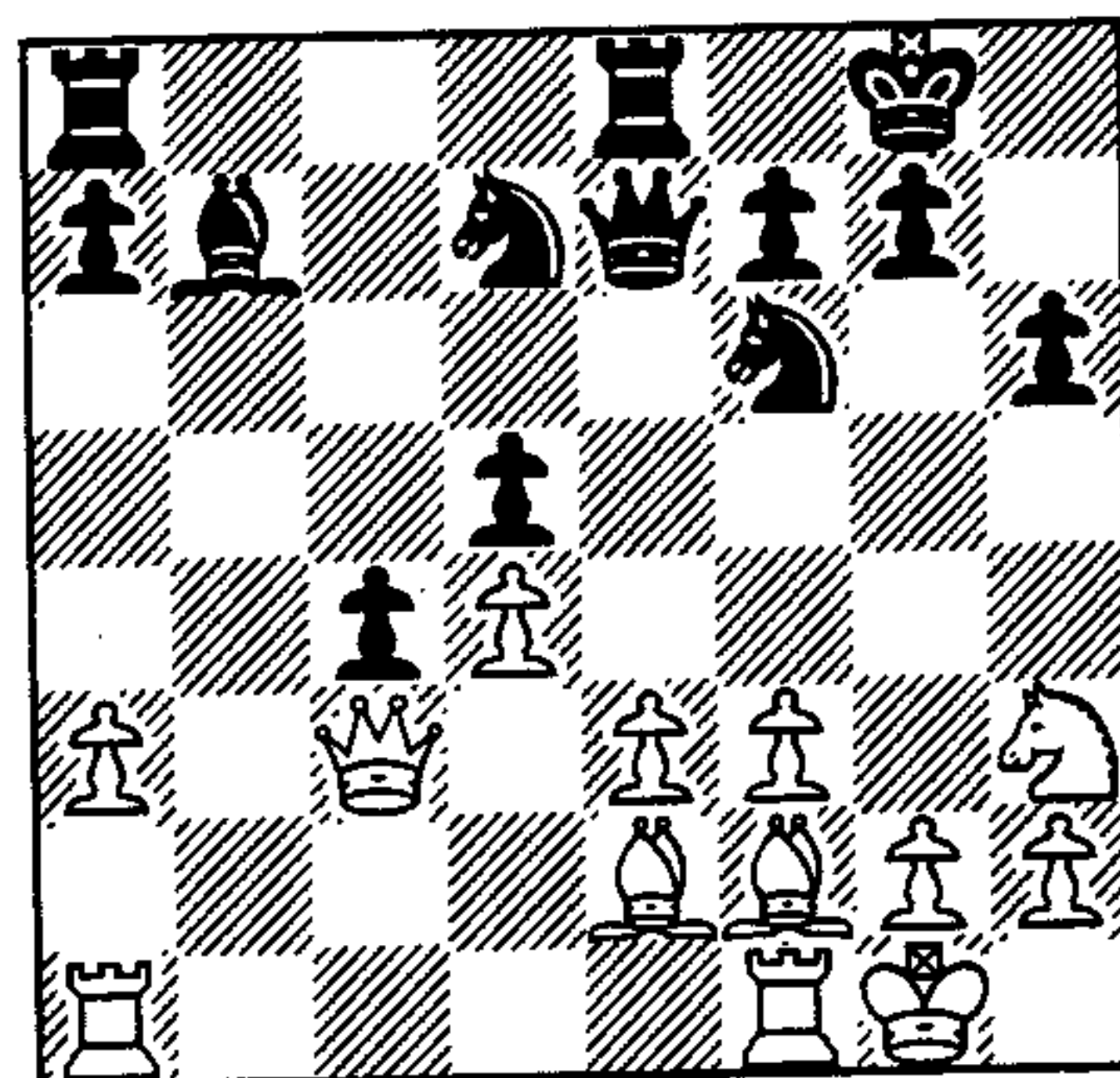
Exercise 106: White to move



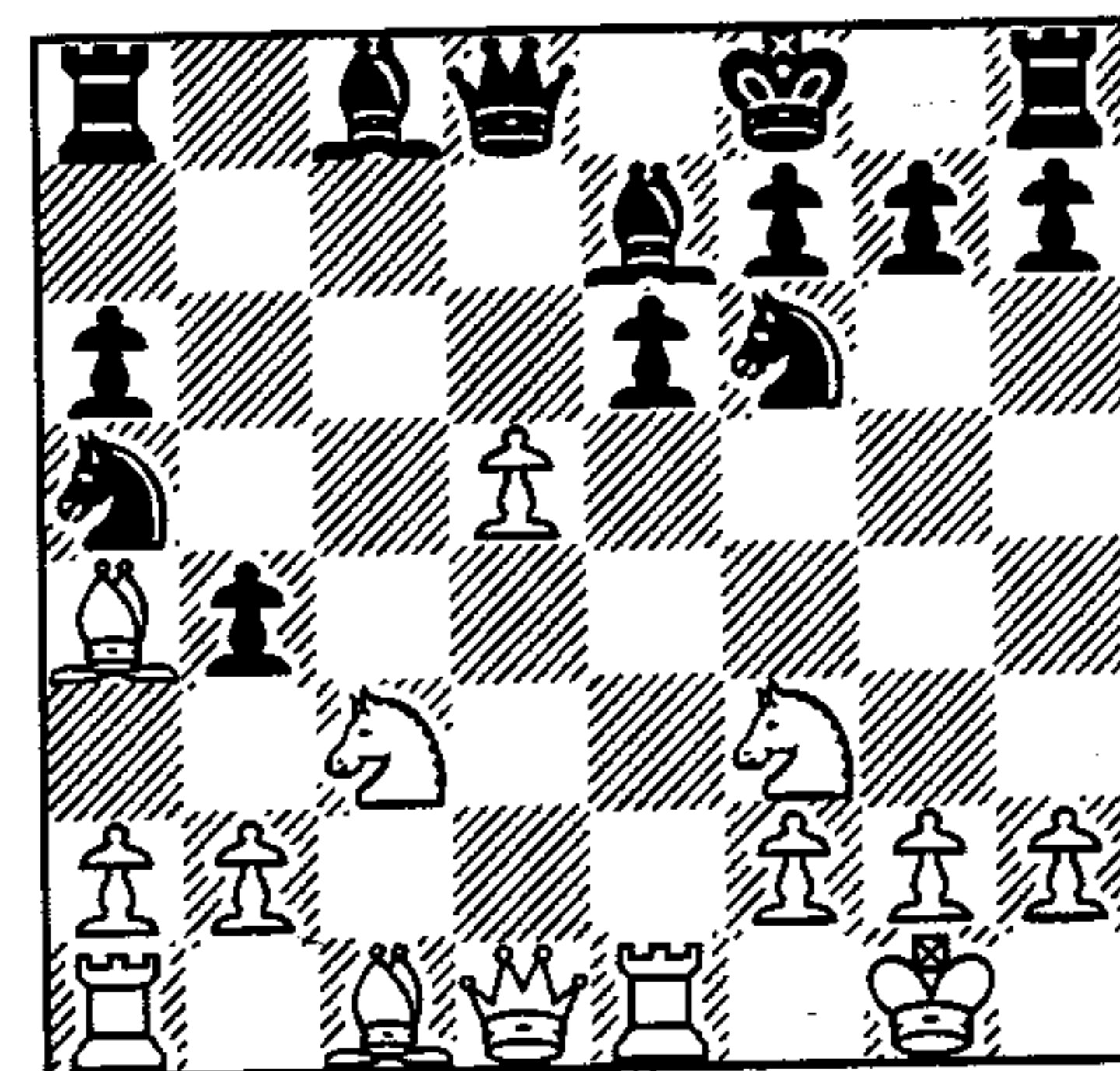
Exercise 104: White to move



Exercise 107: White to move



Exercise 105: White to move

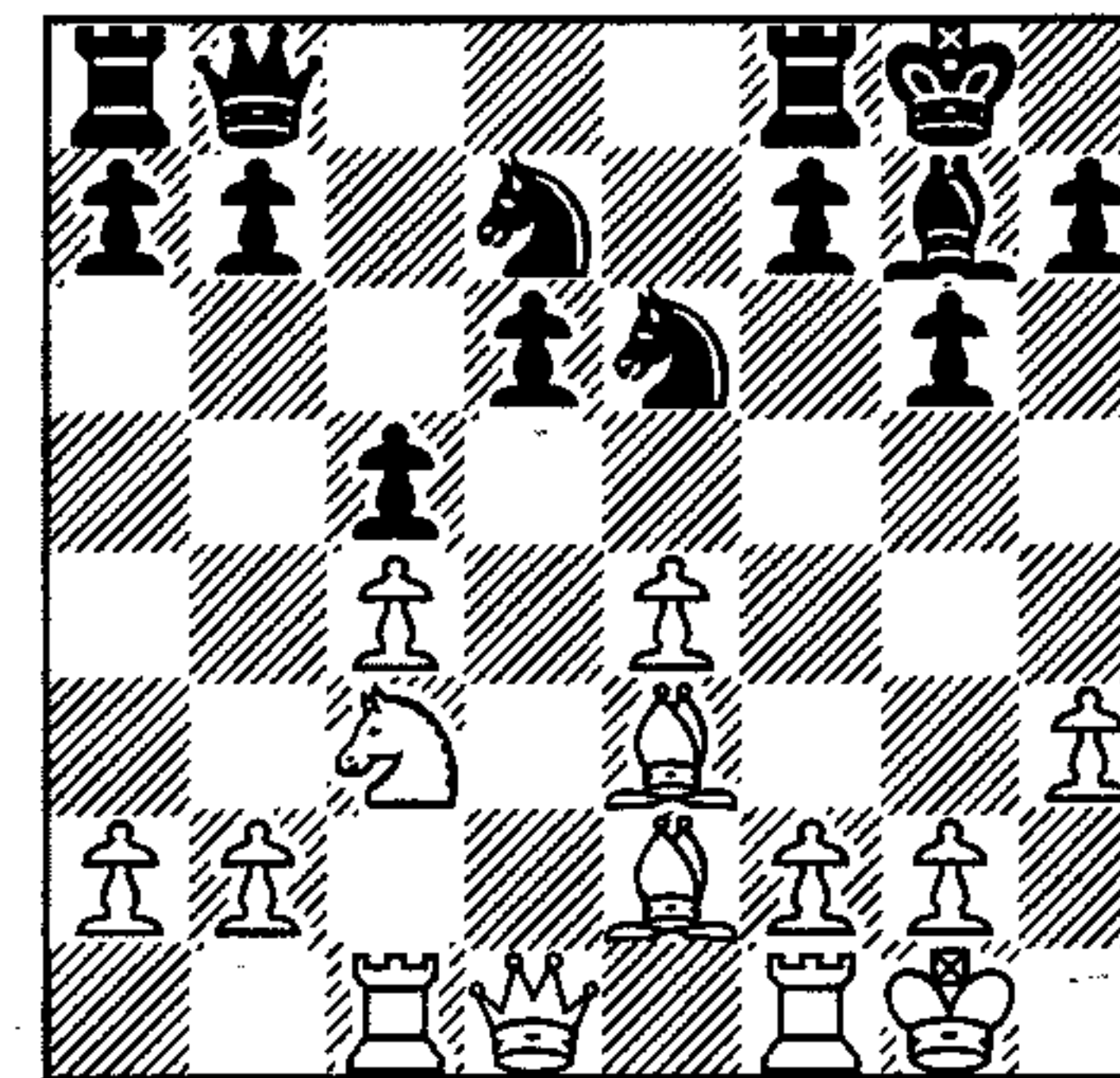


Exercise 108: White to move

CHAPTER EIGHT

Solutions to Exercises

Exercise 1: White to move
Andersson-Vaganian
Skelleftå 1989



White is fully developed. As the rook on f1 might support f2-f4 it is good for now. It is also hard to say where the queen is best placed, and in fact it is quite fine where it is right now. Only the rook on c1 needs to be improved, and b2 needs a little protection. Black, on the other hand, is in a bit of trouble. Of his pieces, only the e6-knight and the bishop are really well placed, although Black is considering ...a7-a6 and ...b7-b5 in the near future in order to

inject some energy into his pieces. But Black also has to respect the weakness on d6. His only way to protect it is by exploiting his control over d4. Therefore White should attack down the d-file with ♖c1-c2-d2.

15 ♖c2!

Threatening 16 ♘b5! etc.

15...a6 16 ♖d2 ♘d4

And now comes the exchange sacrifice, which guarantees White a slight edge. Remember that the e6-knight – now on d4 – and the bishop are the best black pieces!

17 ♗xd4 cxd4 18 ♖xd4! ♗xd4 19 ♗xd4

White is slightly better and is already threatening, for example, ♘d5 and ♗g4. Therefore Black must activate his pieces and surrender d6.

19...♗a7! 20 ♗xd6 ♖ad8 21 ♘d5 ♗g7?!

Here Black could have improved his play with 21...♗c5! 22 ♗xc5 (22 ♗g3 ♗d4! gives Black good counterplay) 22...♘xc5 23 f3 and White has the advantage in the endgame with his two

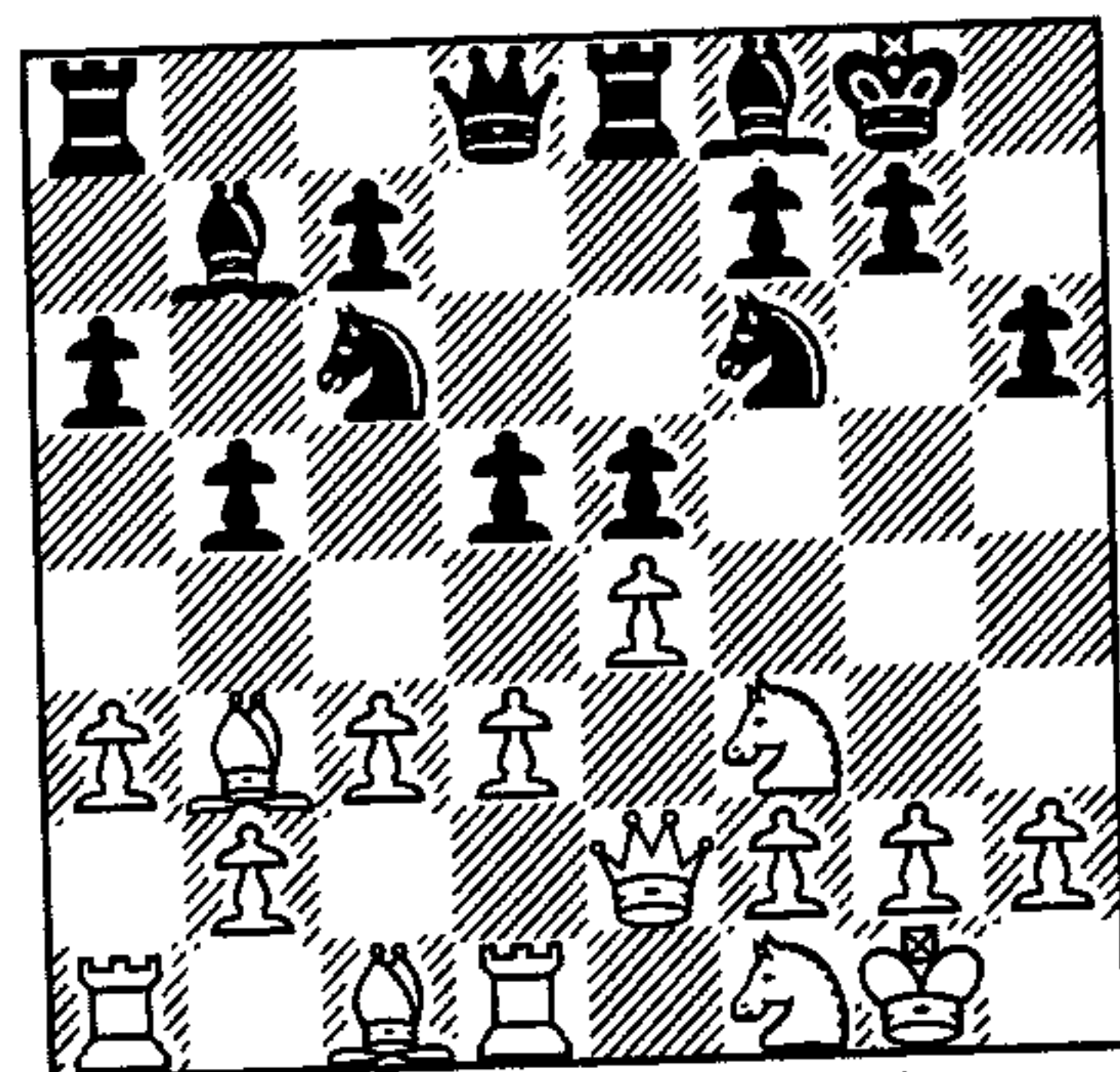
pawns and strong knight on d5.

22 ♖d1!

White is clearly better now and went on to win.

22...♙c5 23 ♖g3 a5 24 ♙c3+ f6 25 ♗f4 ♙e7 26 ♙xa5 ♙xe4 27 ♖d4 ♙e7 28 ♙c7 ♗h8 29 ♗f1 ♙e5 30 ♖xd7 ♖xd7 31 ♙xd7 ♙xf4 32 ♙xb7 ♖b8 33 ♙f7 ♙d6 34 c5 ♙f8 35 ♙xf8+ ♖xf8 36 b4 ♖a8 37 b5 ♖xa2 38 ♗c4 ♖a1+ 39 ♗h2 ♗g7 40 c6 1-0

Exercise 2: Black to move
Ehlvest-Anand
Riga 1995



Black is fully developed. His queen's rook could be better placed but it is not so important right now, unlike the c6-knight, which is without prospects and obstructing the bishop on b7. Actually this is a Christmas exercise (or ideal square exercise, if you like). Where would this knight be best placed? The correct answer is c5.

13...♗b8! 14 ♗e3

14 ♗g3 c5!? gives Black a chance to build up a powerful centre. Anyway, it seems obvious that the knight is well placed on e3.

14...dxe4 15 dxe4 ♗bd7 16 ♗d5

16 ♗h4!? ♗xe4 17 ♗hf5 with some compensation was suggested by Ehlvest.

16...♗c5 17 ♗xf6+

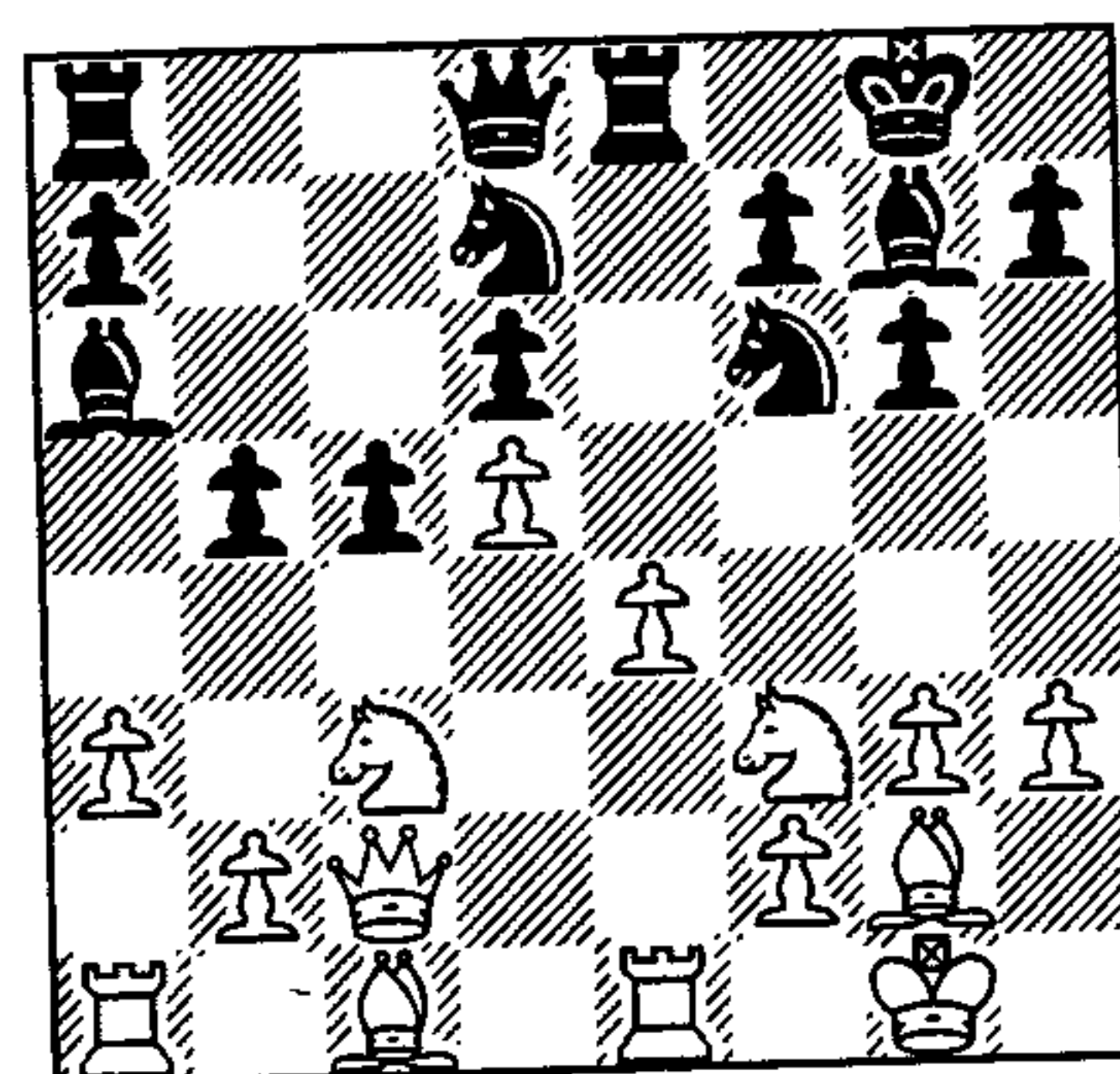
17 ♗b6? ♗xb3 18 ♖xd8 ♖axd8 wins for Black, while after 17 ♗a2 ♗d6 the problems on the d-file are solved. Now it becomes clear that Black is better placed.

17...♙xf6 18 ♗c2 ♙c6 19 ♖e1

Here White could have forced a repetition with 19 ♖d5! ♙f6 20 ♖d1, but now Black takes over.

19...♖ad8 20 ♗d2 ♙e6 21 ♖ab1 ♙c4 22 b4 ♗d3 23 ♗b3 ♙c6 24 ♗d5 ♖xd5 25 exd5 ♙xd5 26 ♖ed1 e4 27 ♗e1 ♖e6 28 ♗e3 ♗d6 29 ♗c5 ♗xc5 30 bxc5 ♖g6 31 ♙e3 ♙h5 32 c4 bxc4 33 ♖d2 ♗c6 34 ♖c2 ♗d5 35 h3 ♗h7 36 ♗h1 f5 37 f4 exf3 38 ♗xf3 ♖e6 39 ♙d4 ♗xf3 40 gxf3 ♙xh3+ 41 ♖h2 ♙xf3+ 42 ♖g2 ♖g6 0-1

Exercise 3: Black to move
Gelfand-Kasparov
Novgorod 1997



The key problem for Black in this position is the 'hanging' bishop on a6

after the key push ...b5-b4. After Black's next the queen's rook does suffer a little but, potentially, it is only one move from being activated, so it is not so critical. It is more important that the rest of the camp is working together. If White gets time to develop freely he will be more naturally placed (mainly due to the a6-bishop).

14...♙c8!

14...♖c8 15 ♗e3 ♙c7 16 ♗f1 ♙b7 17 ♗f4, as played in Van Wely-Kamsky, Amsterdam Donner 1996, seems easier for White, and Black has to consider the fate of the d-pawn.

14...♙b6 15 ♗e3 illustrates beyond any doubt why the queen cannot go to b6 – the c-pawn is pinned.

15 ♗f4

This is the test of Kasparov's new move. Possibly better is 15 ♗f1! b4 16 ♗b5 ♙b8 17 ♙a4! ♗b7 18 ♗f4 ♗f8 19 axb4 ♗xe4 20 ♗xd6 ♗xd6 21 ♙xd7 ♗xf4 22 gxf4 ♙xf4 with a highly complicated position. Later 15 ♗f1 was played in several games, with the conclusion (thus far) being that chances are even.

15...b4 16 ♗a4 b3!

This is the key idea. Black jumps at the opportunity to establish a strong knight on e4 and open b-file simultaneously – and free of charge! If you did not find this move, you did not fully solve the exercise.

17 ♙xb3

17 ♙b1 is possible, but take a look at the rook in the corner, the queen and the knight on a4, and then look at Black's pieces. It is clear that although White does not lose the e-pawn right now, something bad is going to happen.

17...♗xe4 18 ♙c2

18 ♗c3? ♖b8 19 ♙c2 ♖xb2! is simple.

18...♗df6

Black is well placed and White has a few co-ordination problems, but perhaps White will still be able to hold balance if he respects this. In the game he failed to do so and was soon torn apart.

19 g4?!

19 ♗g5! to challenge the strong centralised knight seems to be better.

19...♙d7 20 g5?! ♗h5 21 ♗h2 f5!

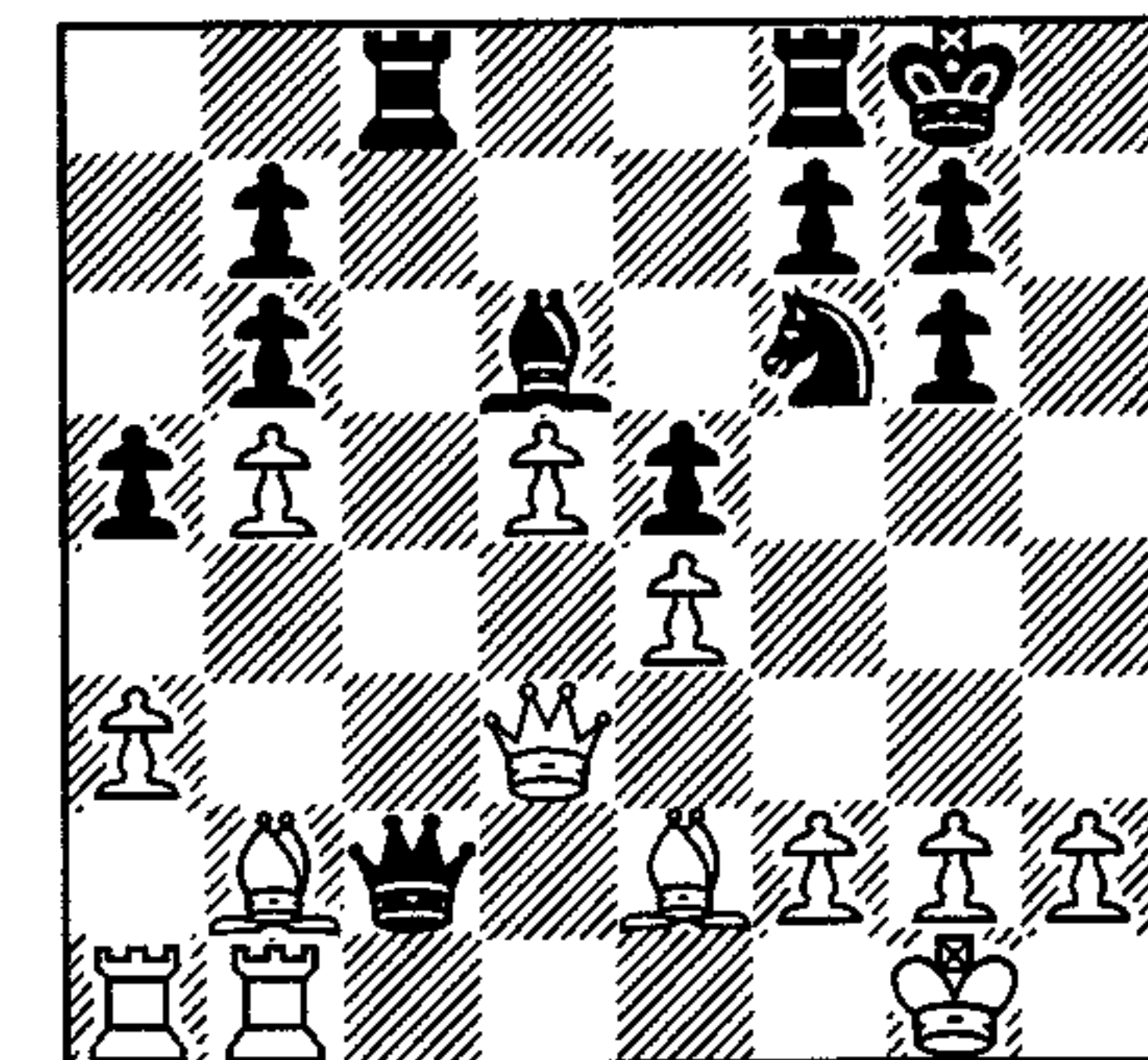
Black's advantage is now obvious.

22 ♗c3 ♖ab8 23 ♖ab1 ♗xc3!

Maintaining the powerful knight.

24 bxc3 ♖xb1 25 ♖xb1 ♗c4 26 ♗d2 ♗xd2 27 ♙xd2 f4! 28 ♖e1 ♖e5!? 29 ♖e4? ♖xe4 30 ♗xe4 ♙xh3 31 ♗g2 ♙g4 32 ♙e1 ♗g7! 33 f3 ♙xg5 34 ♙b1 ♗f5 35 ♙b8+ ♗g7 36 ♙xa7+ ♗h6 37 ♙f7 ♗f1! 38 ♗xf1 ♗e3+ 39 ♗e1 ♙h4+! 40 ♗e2 ♙xh2 41 ♗d3 ♗f5 0-1

Exercise 4: Black to move
Miles-Korchnoi
Lugano 1989



This exercise is really quite simple. The light-squared bishop is not too im-

pressive and has little scope for improvement, while White's other bishop is superior. Therefore the following exchange sacrifice, creating a formidable centre, is quite logical.

21...♖xe4! 22 ♖xc2 ♖xc2 23 ♔d3 ♖xb2 24 ♖xb2 ♘c5

Black has compensation and is perhaps even a little better already. Either way, the position is more difficult to play for White in practice. Neither his bishop nor his rooks have any good squares.

25 ♔c2 ♖c8

25...f5!? is possible, but this might give White a sense of purpose as the pawn chain can be attacked with f2-f3 and g2-g4, thus revitalising the bishop. Therefore Black is doing the logical thing – first improve your strongest piece! This is the endgame and these things count!

26 ♖e1 ♘d7 27 a4 ♖f8 28 g3 f5 29 f3 ♖f7 30 ♖g2

30 g4!? was more optimistic, but White still seems to have too little potential activity.

30...♖c4 31 ♖a2 ♘f6 32 ♖d1 ♖e7 33 ♖d3 ♖d7 34 ♖d1 ♖c5 35 ♔b3 ♖c3 36 ♔c2 ♔c5 37 ♖d3 ♖c4 38 d6 e4 39 fxe4 fxe4 40 ♔b3 ♖b4 41 ♖c3 ♖xd6 42 h4?! ♖e5

42...♔d4! was stronger.

43 ♔f7 ♖b1 44 ♔xg6?

44 ♖h3! ♘d5 45 ♖c4 keeps the disadvantage to a minimum.

44...♘d5

Now Black is much better.

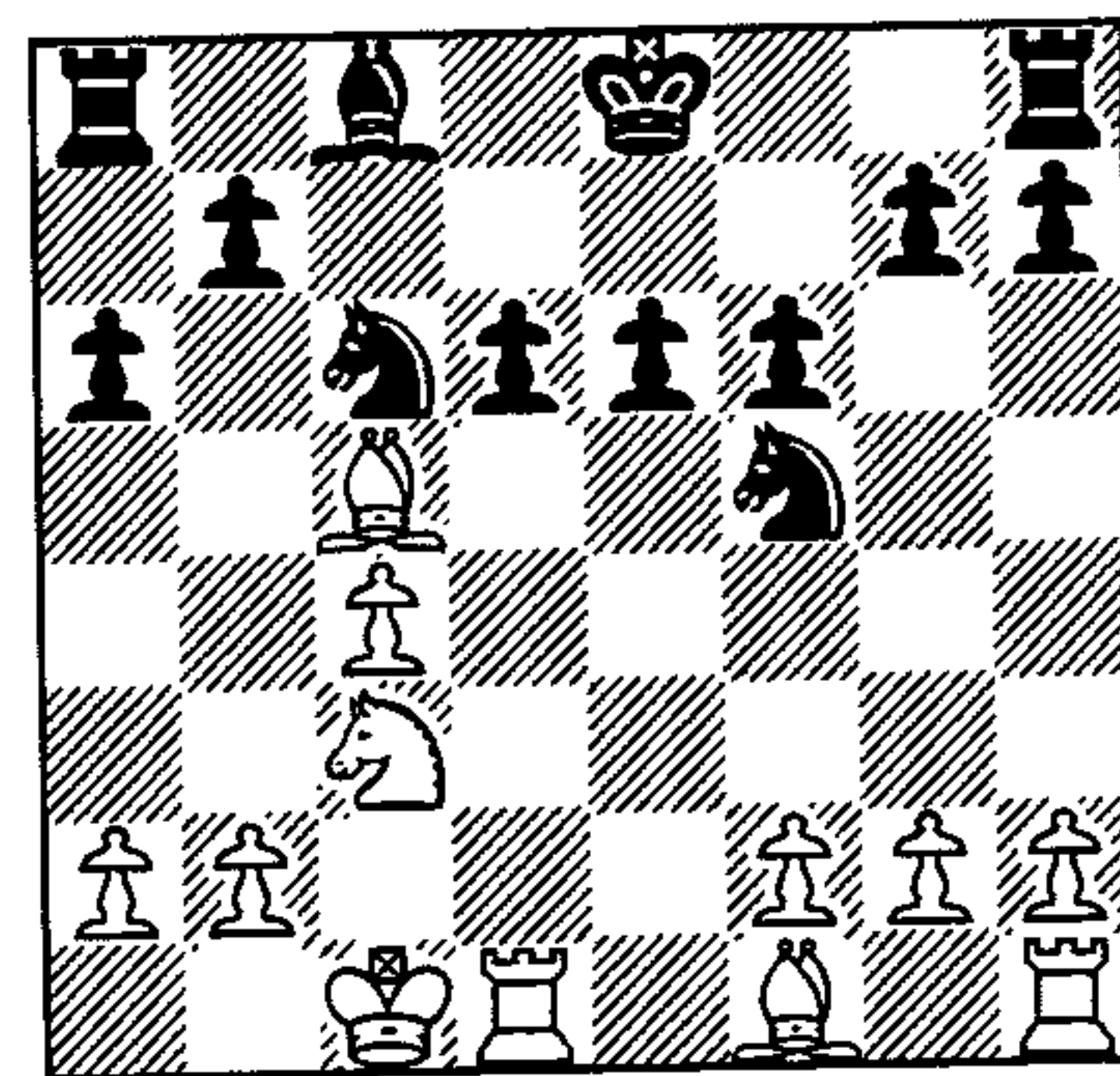
45 ♖cc2 ♘e3+ 46 ♖h3 ♘xc2 47 ♖xc2 ♖b4 48 ♖a2 ♔d4 49 ♖g2 ♔b2 50 h5 ♖d4 51 ♖f2 ♖c3 52 ♖e3 ♖b3 53 ♔f7+ ♖c2 54 g4 ♖c3

55 ♔g6 ♔c1+ 56 ♖e2 ♔g5 57 ♔f5 ♖d4 58 ♔g6 ♖b4 59 ♔f5 ♖d3 60 ♖e1 ♖d4

Easier was 60...♖a3! 61 ♖xa3 ♖xa3 62 ♔xe4 ♖xa4 63 ♖d1 ♖b3 64 ♔c2+ ♖c3 65 ♔a4 ♖b4 66 ♔c2 a4 etc.

61 ♖e2 e3 62 ♖f3 ♖f4+ 63 ♖g2 ♖d4 64 ♖f3 ♖b3 65 ♖a1 ♖f4+ 66 ♖g3 ♖f2 67 ♔e6+ ♖c3 68 ♖c1+ ♖d4 69 ♖h3 e2 70 ♖g3 ♖f1 0-1

Exercise 5: White to move
Korchnoi-Timman
Brussels 1991



This is really a difficult exercise. There is no clear-cut way of deciding between the various possibilities. White should consider whether the two bishops are enough for the pawn deficit, and this appears to be the case if we compare pieces and squares. The d6-pawn is soft and will most likely fall anyway (♘e4 is a possibility). The choice is now how White should choose to maintain the bishops.

17 ♔xd6?

This affords Black easy development and restores his control over the light squares. Indeed White should be careful now. Alternatives:

17 ♔a3! seems best. Black is weak on a number of dark squares but it is only d6, e7 and d4 he is trying to control. Now 17...e5! is practically forced as it is hard to see any other moves (after 17...♖e7 18 ♔d3! Black cannot allow ♔xf5 and his king is awful on e7, e.g. 18...♘fd4 19 ♖he1 and it is evident that Black is in trouble – with ♘d5 just one of several ways for White to infiltrate – although there is no forced way to an overwhelming advantage). After (17...e5!) 18 ♘e4 0-0 19 ♘xd6 White stands well. One option is to break Black's centre with f2-f4, while also interesting is 18 ♘d5!? (Korchnoi) with the idea of ♘b6, when Black's queenside is rather cramped.

17 ♔b6!? is an interesting move with some justification. The key idea is to prevent Black from playing ...♖d8 to protect the d6-pawn. Later White will attack it with ♔c7 and ♘e4. My main objection to this move is that the knight in many lines after ♔a3 comes to b6 and dominates completely. It is not easy to decide, but this is probably only the second best move.

17 g4? does not work at all. Black, naturally, will not allow his bishop to be locked in, so after 17...dxc5 18 gxf5 he will play 18...e5!, when White is struggling for equality. Look at the d4-square – White lost control of it by exchanging his bishop. On 19 ♖g1 both 19...g5!? and 19...♖f7 20 ♘e4 ♘d4! appear to be better for Black, although there are still tactics to consider.

17...♘xd6 18 ♖xd6 ♖e7 19 c5!?

Trying for more than the position promises. After 19 ♖d2 the position is in balance. Notice that Black no longer

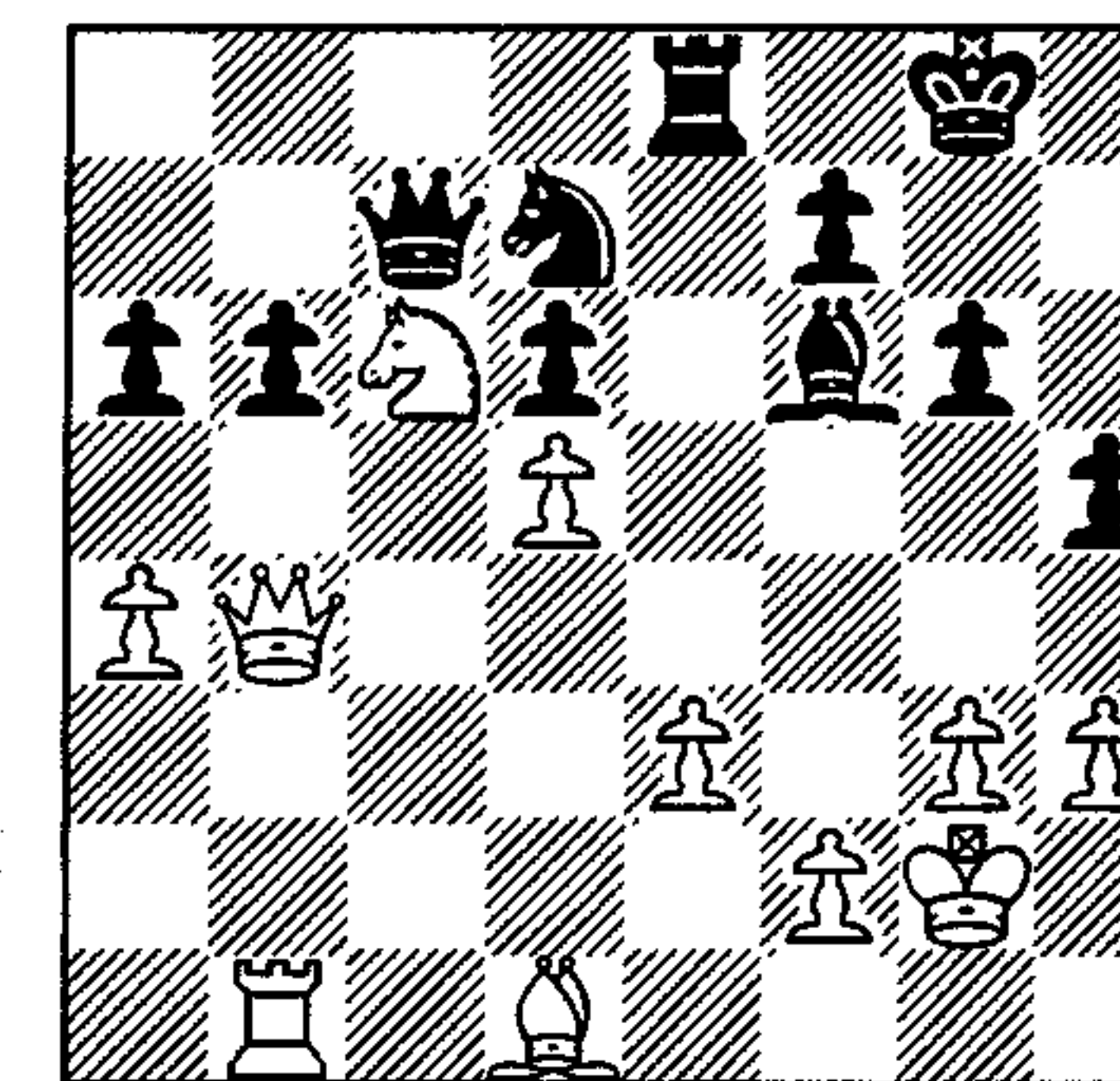
suffers from tardy development.

19...♔d7 20 g3 ♖ac8 21 ♔h3? ♘e5! 22 ♖hd1 ♖hd8 23 ♔g2 ♖xc5 24 ♔xb7 a5 25 ♔e4 ♘g4?!

25...f5! is preferable.

26 ♖6d2 f5 27 ♔g2 ♘f6 28 f4 ♖b8 29 ♖e1 h6 30 ♖d4 ♖b4 31 ♖ed1 g5 32 a3 ♖xd4 33 ♖xd4 ♘g4 34 h4! ♘e3 35 ♔f3 gxh4 36 gxh4 ♔c6 37 ♔e2 ♘d5 38 ♖d2 ♘xc3 39 bxc3 ♔e4 40 ♖c4 ♖d5+ 41 ♖e3 ♖d6 42 ♖c8 ♖c5 43 ♔a6 ½-½

Exercise 6: White to move
Karpov-Portisch
Tilburg 1988



White clearly has a space advantage and prospects of an attack against the enemy pawns. His best piece stands on c6, which can be neutralised by Black's knight but just not right now. 38 ♔e2!? is a fine move, but Black would never play 38...a5?, losing what is left of his light square control. Remember that your opponent will try to counter your plans, so 38...♖a8! is the only move. This position had already been on the board, in fact. Now after 39 g4 White appears to have achieved a preferable version of the game, which also gave

him an advantage. However, concrete calculation reveals that the black rook is better placed on a8 than on e8 if the world collapses. After 39...hxg4 40 ♖xg4 ♕c5! it is good that a6 is protected. Therefore Karpov chose the appropriate path when he decided on his next.

38 g4!

38 h4?! merely creates a weakness on the dark squares. A possible variation is 38...♔g7! (preparing for g3-g4) 39 g4? hxg4 40 ♖xg4 ♖h8 41 h5 ♕e5! 42 ♕xe5 ♖xe5 and Black suddenly has a very active position in which there is no reason why he should lose. Note that 43 hxg6?? ♖c2! 44 ♖f1 (44 ♔f3 f5!) 44...♖xg6 followed by ...f7-f5 is winning for Black.

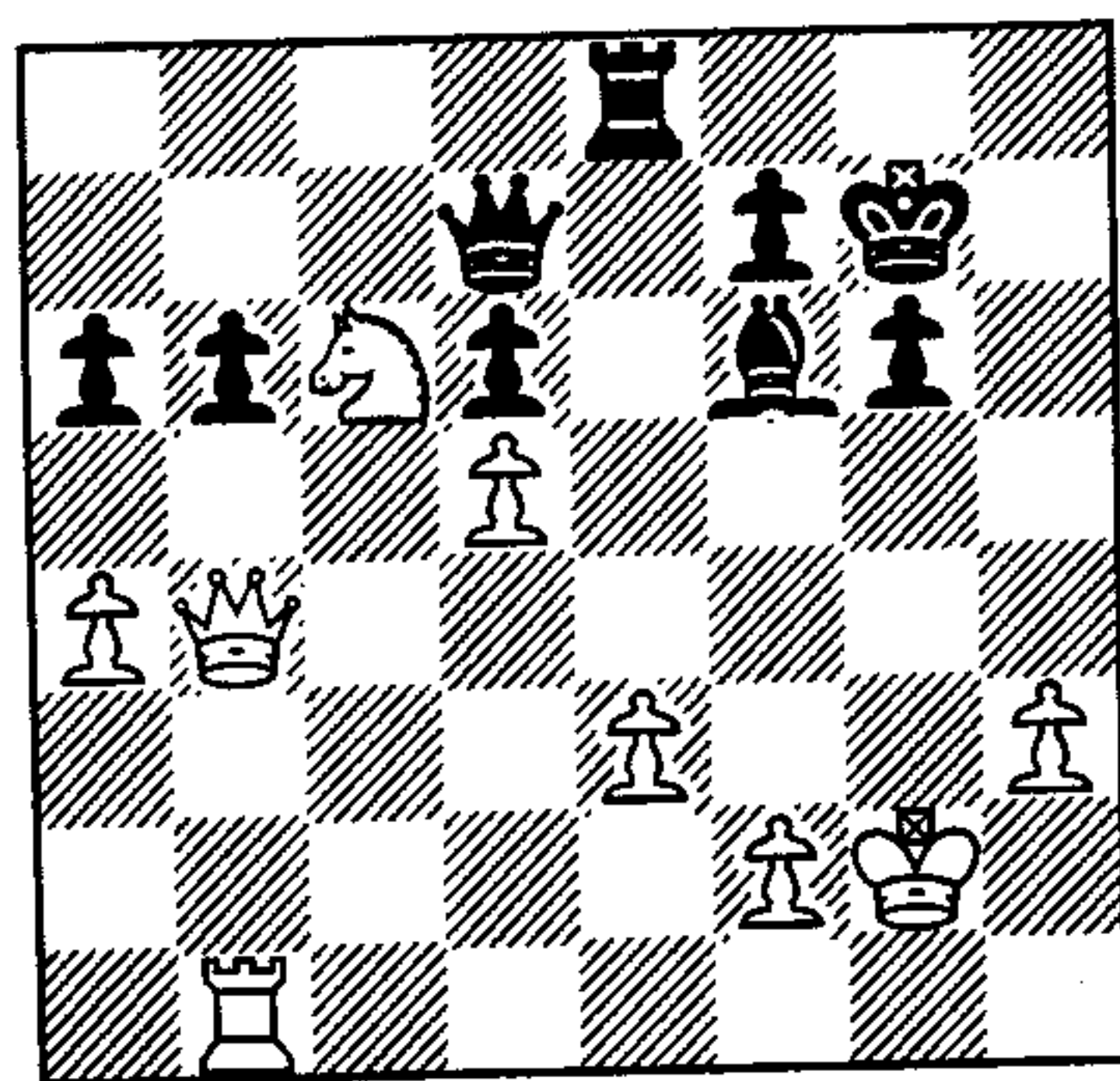
38...hxg4

38...h4 has been suggested but after 39 ♖f4!, intending g4-g5, Black is in trouble.

39 ♖xg4! ♔g7

Black cannot avoid the exchange of bishop for knight as 39...♕c5 40 ♖xb6 ♖xb6 41 ♖xb6 ♕xa4 42 ♖xa6 gives White a clear advantage.

40 ♖xd7 ♖xd7



41 ♖f4!

41 ♖xb6?! ♖f5 and White is too far away from the kingside.

41...♖h8?!

41...♖c7, favouring White, was necessary. The rook is simply best placed on e8. White's next move would probably be 42 ♖b3!, overprotecting e3 and preparing an advance on the kingside.

42 ♖g4 ♖e8

42...♖c7 43 f4 and White is coming. **43 ♖xb6 ♖h4 44 ♖f3 ♖xa4 45 ♖b8 ♖d7?!**

A mistake. After 45...♖e4 46 ♖xe4 ♖xe4 47 ♖a8 ♖a4 48 ♕b8 ♖a5 (48...a5 49 ♖a6) 49 e4 White has some advantage but it is still hard to win.

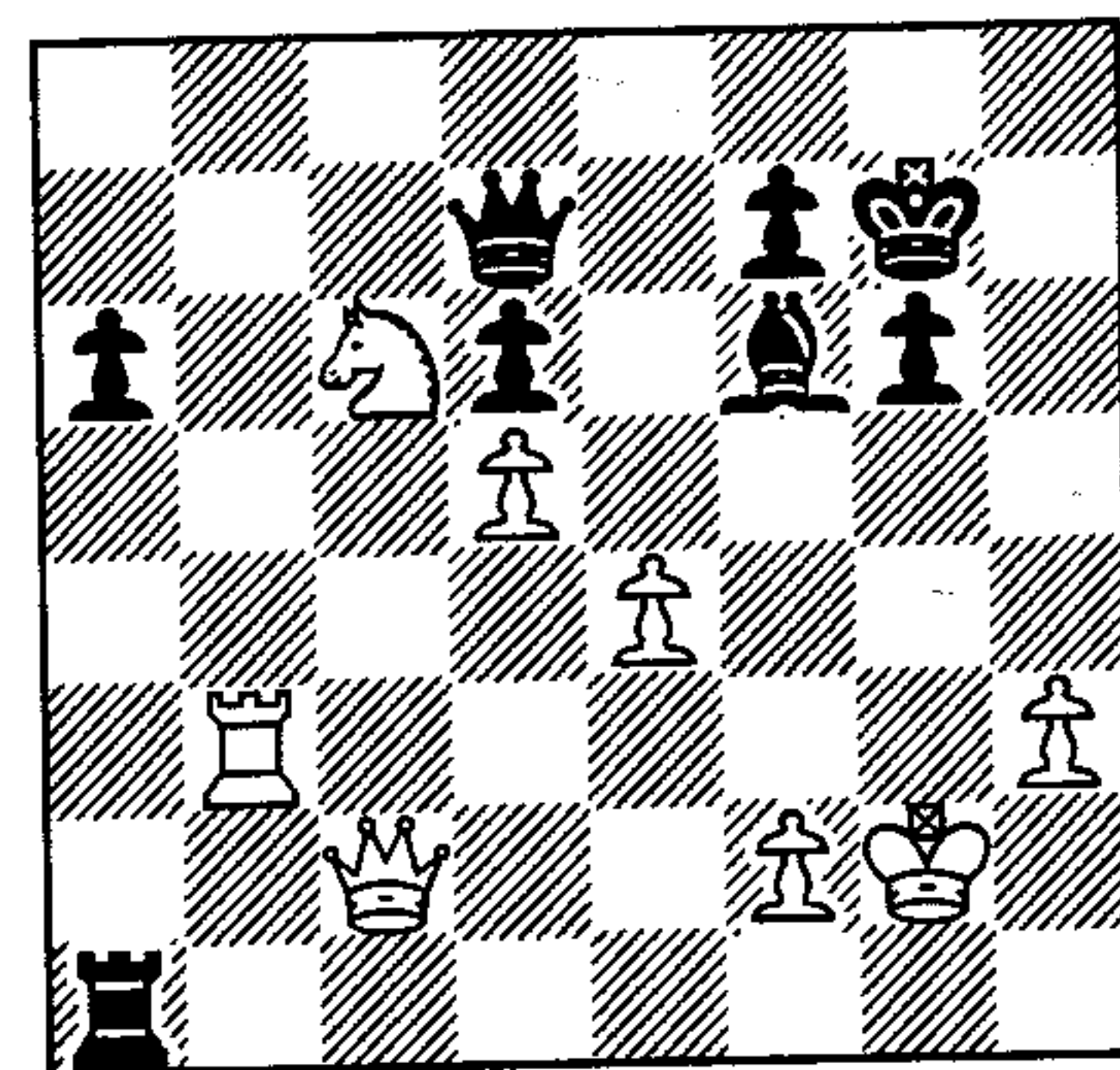
46 ♖a8 ♖h4 47 e4 ♖f6 48 ♖d3 ♖b7 49 ♖b8 ♖d7 50 ♖c2 ♖a3 51 ♖b3 ♖a1?

51...♖xb3 52 ♖xb3 followed by ♖a3 gives White very good winning chances. Now it is over, but I've thrown in an extra exercise here.

Exercise 7: White to move

Karpov-Portisch

Tilburg 1988



52 ♖f3! ♖b7

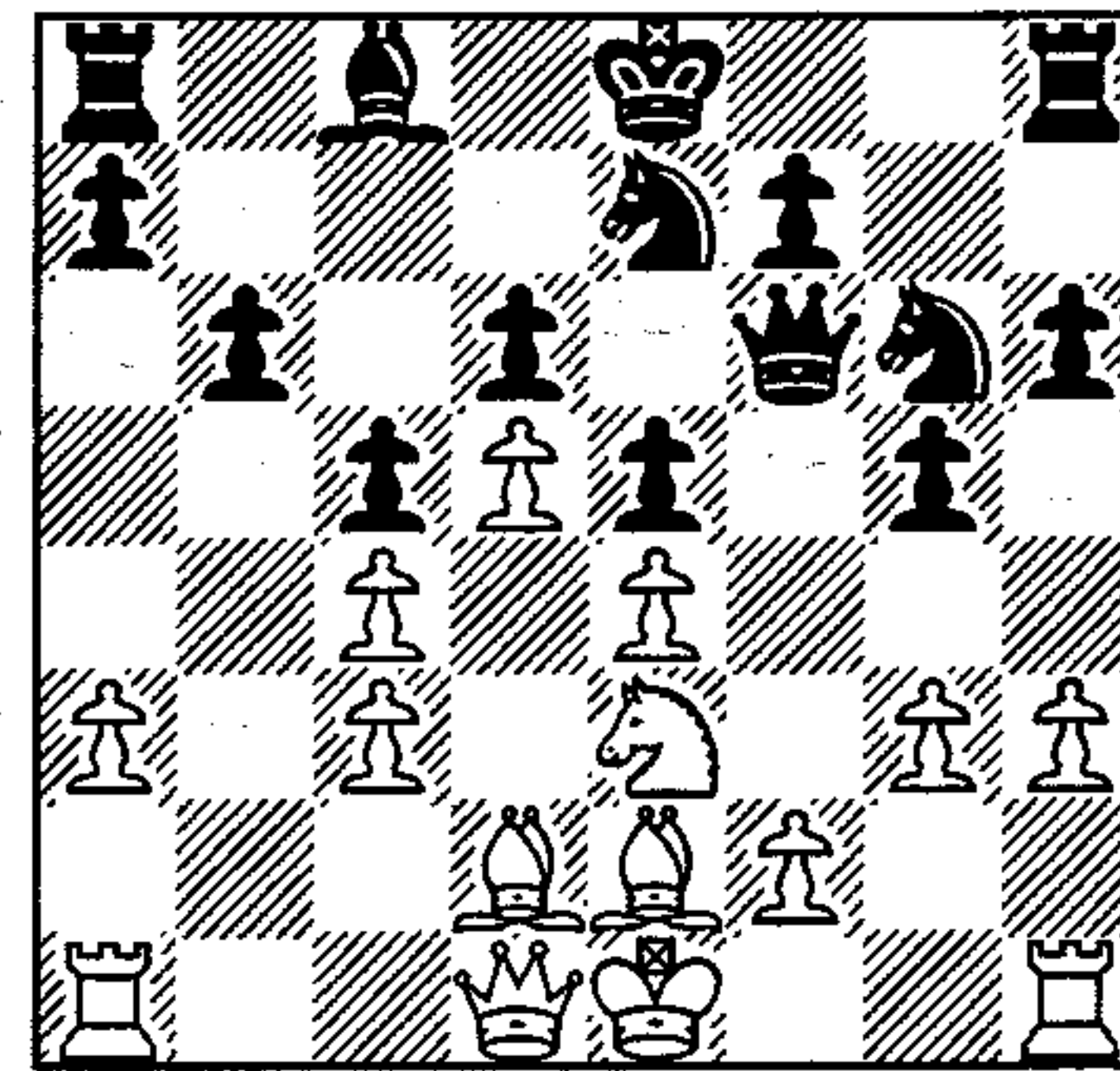
52...♖e5 53 ♕xe5 dxex5 54 ♖b2 ♖a4 55 ♖xe5+ ♔g8 56 ♖b3 and White wins.

53 ♖xf6 ♖b5 54 ♖c3 ♖f1+ 55 ♔g3 ♖g1+ 56 ♔h4 1-0

Exercise 8: Black to move

Yusupov-Lutz

Horgen 1994



Closed positions are often the most difficult to play and, unfortunately, you cannot always avoid them. Here Black needs to organise his forces in the best possible way.

The primary concern for Black in this position is to find a safe haven for his king. This is not so easy! Players with prior knowledge of this type of position can probably find some of the ideas, but the initial concept is very difficult to find. First, castling kingside seems very dangerous. White will not find it too difficult to attack the h6-g5 pawn duo in view of the missing dark-squared bishop, and Black has little chance of creating active counterplay on the queenside in time. Secondly, castling long would send the king the right way, but at the same time leave the defending pieces on the kingside. So the right move is...

17...♔d8! 18 ♖g4 ♔c7 19 ♖b1

So far so good, but now comes the

crucial part. White's only way to break open the queenside is through a4-a5, so Black will need to play ...♖b8 at some point to protect b6. But then we need to remember that ♕e3-c2-a3-b5 will most likely follow, so we need a safe spot for the king. This is b8, hence Black's next two moves.

19...♖b8! 20 ♕c2 ♖b7 21 ♕a3 ♔b8

Black would always have to play this, but by doing so right away he allows himself the opportunity to decide on his plan for counterplay with the exact knowledge of where White is going, a luxury he did not have on move 19.

22 ♕b5 ♖d8

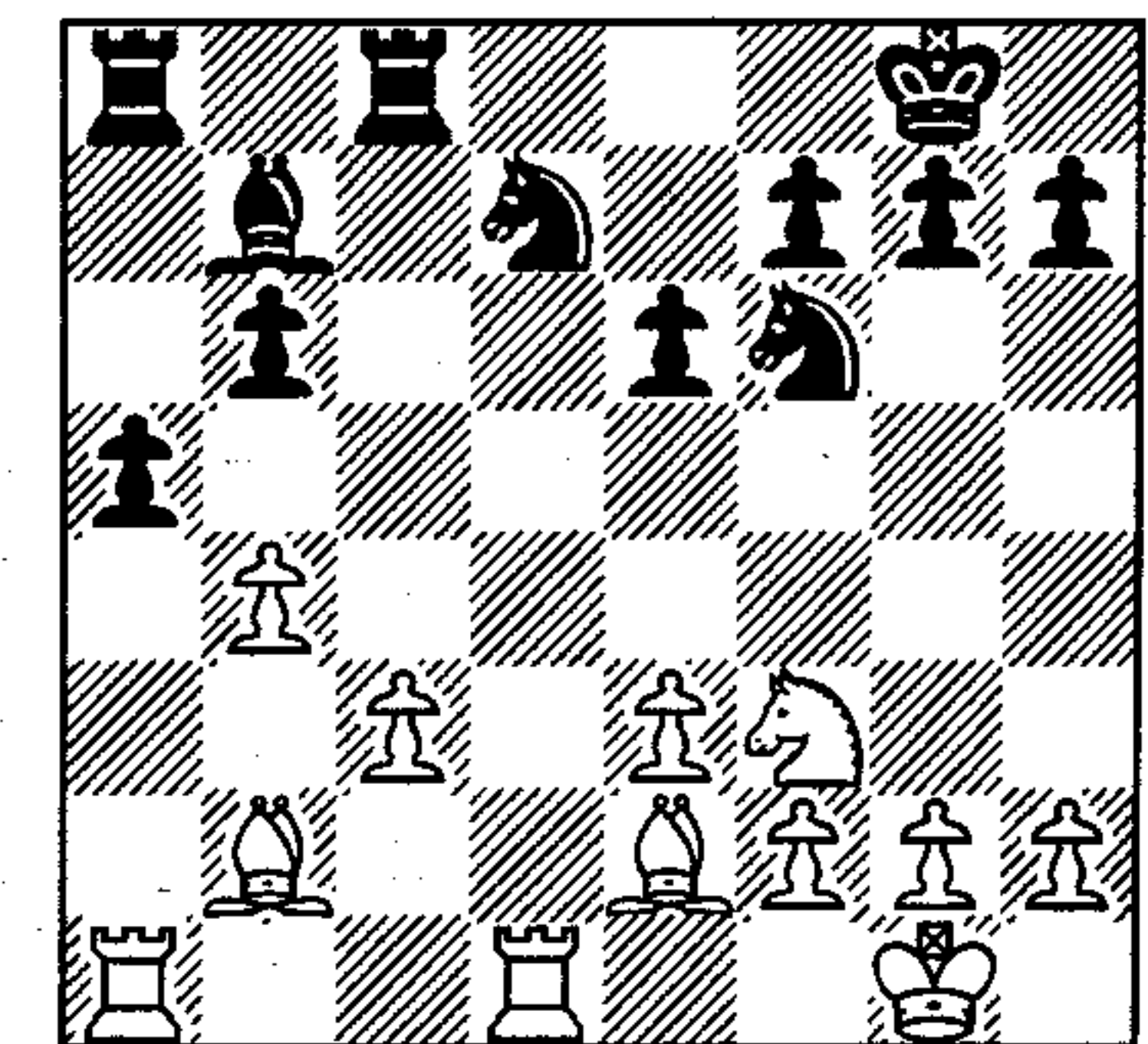
And Black has a solid position.

23 ♔e2 ♖h8!? 24 ♖a4 a5! 25 ♖xc8 ♕xc8 26 ♖b2 ♖e8 27 ♖c2 ♖d7 28 ♖e3 ½-½

Exercise 9: White to move

Yusupov-Rozentalis

Germany 1995



White is generally well placed here, but so is Black. Both sides have completed development, but this is not the middlegame(!), and there is no possibility of attacking the kings. Consequently it is more precise to talk about the tran-

sition from middlegame to endgame. Since no immediate action is any good White should simply improve something, and that is the king.

16 ♖f1!

This was a new move at the time, impossible to find by mere calculation yet easy to find if we remember our rules (without being slaves to them of course, as we never know which rule is valid when until we investigate it).

16 ♘d4 ♙d5! sees Black take control of c4 and equalise immediately (now the b2-bishop is going to have problems activating).

16 ♙b5 has similar drawbacks, since after 16...♙c6! 17 ♙xc6 ♖xc6 White has problems with the light squares once again. Then we have 18 bxa5 (White is trying to force something, but perhaps it is safer to force a draw with 18 c4!? ♖xc4 19 bxa5 bxa5 20 ♙xf6 ♘xf6 21 ♖xa5) 18...bxa5 19 ♘e5 but Black just plays the cool 19...♖b6! and, if anyone is better, it is Black. After 20 ♙c1 He can remain cool or force a draw with 20...♘xe5 21 ♖xa5 ♖c8 22 ♖xe5 ♘d5 23 ♙d2 ♖bc6 24 ♖e4 ♘xc3 25 ♙xc3 ♖xc3, when White's winning chances seem quite slim.

16...♙d5 17 ♘d2 ♘e5

17...axb4 18 cxb4 ♖xa1 19 ♙xa1 and the bishop pair secures White a slight advantage.

18 f3 ♘e8!?

Going to d6-c4. Note the variation 18...♘c4? 19 ♘xc4 ♙xc4 20 ♙xc4 ♖xc4 21 bxa5 bxa5 22 ♖xa5 – this time it works!

19 e4 ♙c4 20 ♘xc4 ♘xc4 21 ♙xc4!

21 ♙c1 ♘ed6 and Black is well

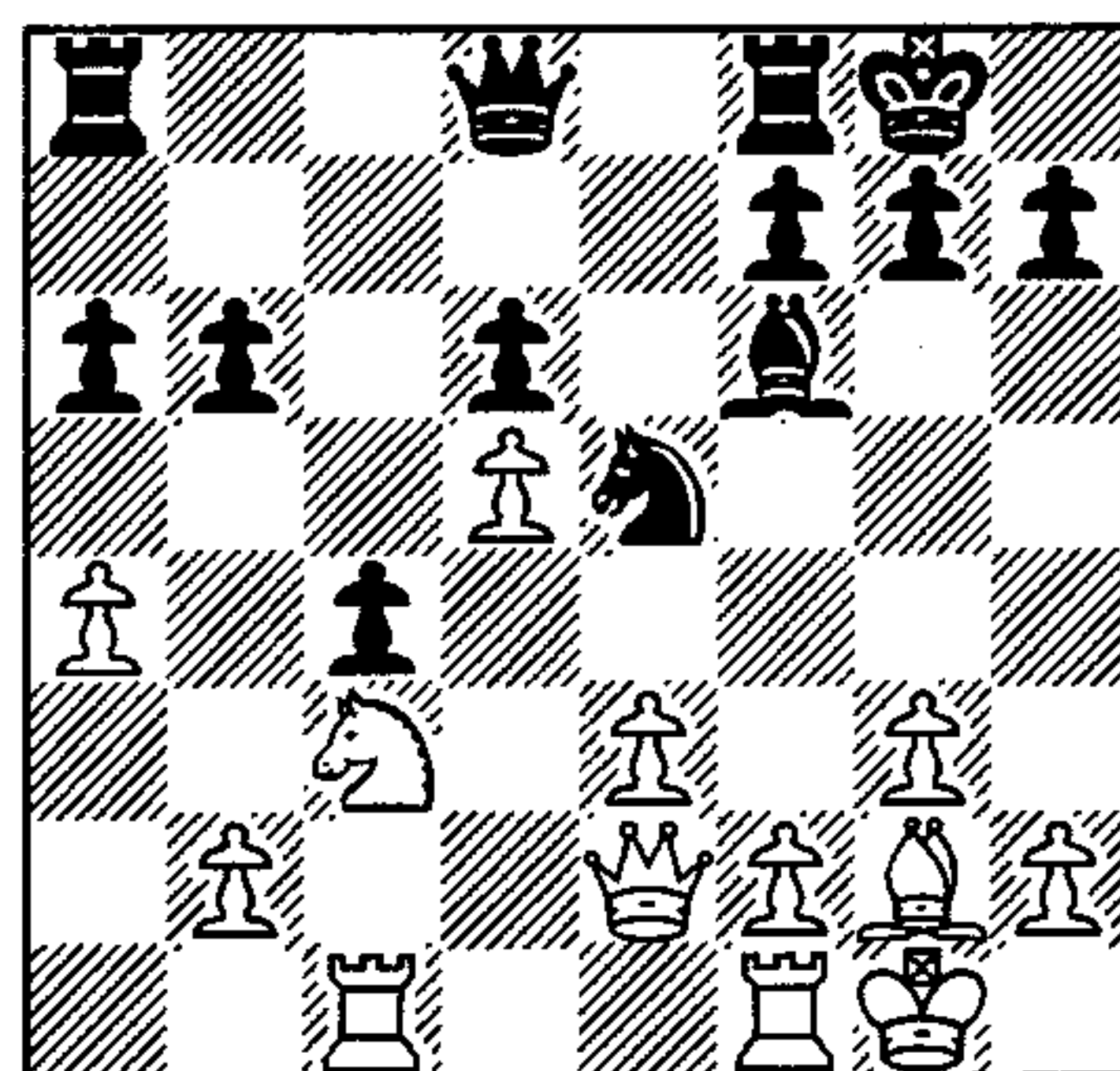
placed.

21...♖xc4 22 ♖d7

White has a slight advantage which, in the game, proved to be enough.

22...♖c7 23 ♖ad1! f6 24 ♖xc7 ♘xc7 25 ♖d6 ♖b8 26 ♙e2 e5 27 g3!? ♖f8 28 ♖d7 ♘e6 29 ♙e3 axb4?! 30 cxb4 ♖c8 31 ♙d3 ♖c6 32 h4 h5 33 ♙c3 ♙e8 34 ♖b7 ♙d8 35 ♖b8+ ♙e7 36 b5 ♖d6+ 37 ♙c4 ♘c5 38 ♙b4 ♖d4+ 39 ♙c3 ♖d3+ 40 ♙c2 ♖d4 41 ♖b7+! ♙e8 42 ♙xc5 bxc5 43 ♖xg7 ♖b4 44 ♖b7 ♖f8 45 ♙c3 ♙g8 46 b6 ♖f8 47 g4 hxg4 48 fxg4 ♙g8 49 h5 ♙h8 50 h6 1-0

Exercise 10: White to move
Karpov-Portisch
Tilburg 1988



This is actually our Karpov-Portisch game from exercises 6 and 7. Here Black's only good thing is the c-pawn and the potential force of the queenside pawns, so Karpov chooses to eliminate them as his own advantages will never go away (the weakness of c6 and the prospects of a queenside offensive).

19 ♙e4!!

Simply taking control over d3, but

that is far from the full story. The bishop should not hope for e4 to be its permanent resting square.

19 ♘a2 has been suggested. I wonder what it is with these ♘a2/♘a7 moves... 19...b5 and now a typical line is 20 ♘b4 ♖a5! 21 ♘c6 ♘xc6 22 dxc6 ♖xa4 and Black has good play. With ♘a2 White is forcing play, wanting to reach c6 at once.

19...♖e8
The weakness of the kingside is an illusion. After 19...♖c8 20 f4! ♘g6 (20...♘d7 21 ♙f5 and White wins something very soon) 21 ♙xg6 hxg6 22 ♘e4 White wins material. The weakness on e3 is not enough to compensate for this as it is not clear right now how Black is going to attack it.

20 ♙c2!

The key idea is to play b2-b3 and put the queenside under pressure. 20 f4? ♘d7 21 ♖xc4 ♘c5 favours Black.

20...♖c8 21 ♘e4 ♙e7

21...b5 22 b3 secures White a slight advantage.

22 b3 cxb3 23 ♙xb3

White is better. I think most of you can remember the finish of the game.

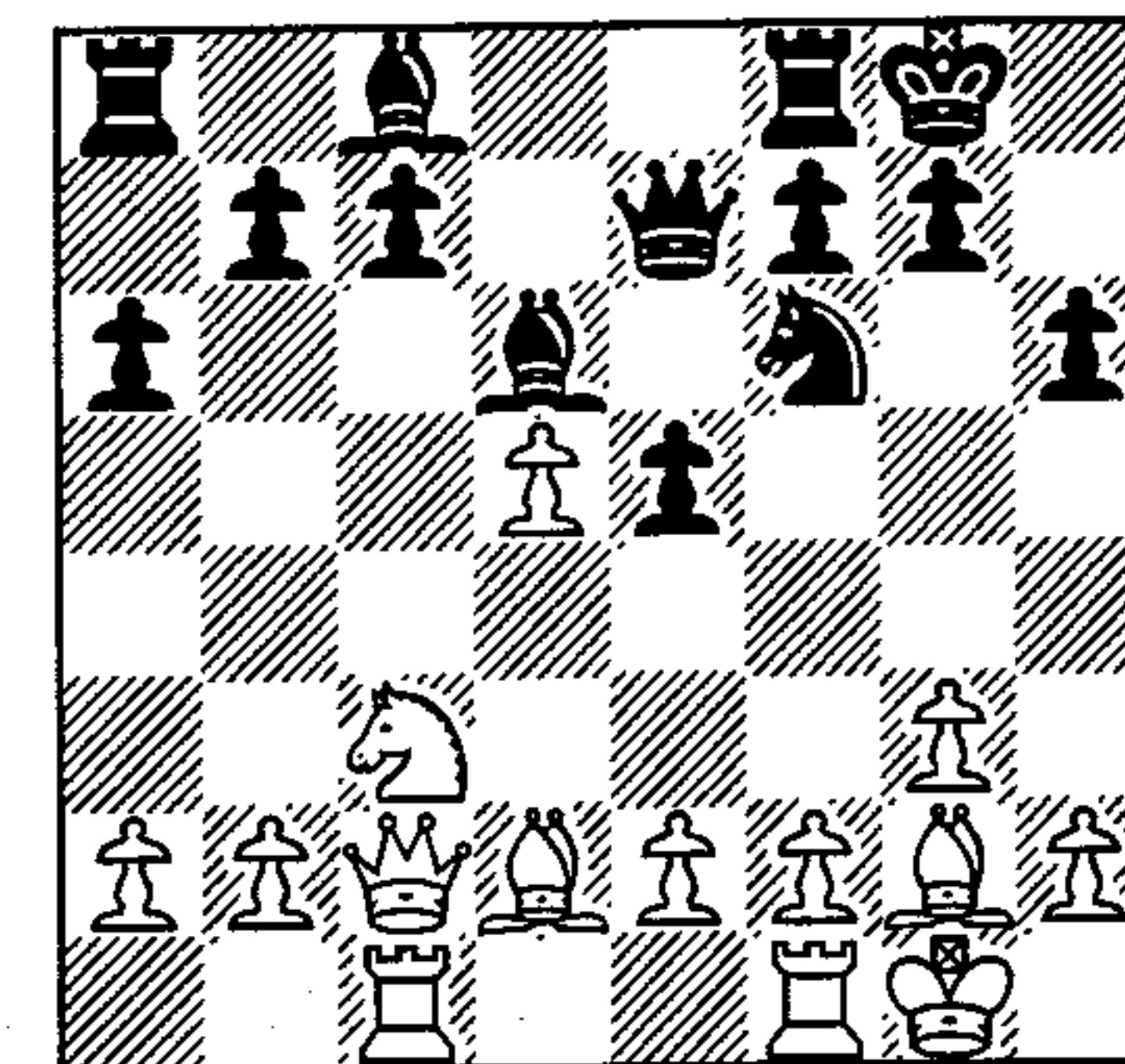
23...♖d7 24 ♖xc8 ♖xc8 25 ♖b1 ♖f5 26 ♘d2 ♖b8 27 ♙d1 ♖c8 28 ♘b3 ♙f6 29 ♘d4 ♖b7 30 ♖c2! g6 31 ♙e2 ♙g7 32 ♖b3 ♘d7 33 ♘c6 ♖a8 34 ♖b4 ♖c7 35 ♙g2 h5 36 h3 ♙g8 37 ♙d1 ♖e8 38 g4!?

Here we are – Home again!

38...hxg4 39 ♙xg4! ♙g7 40 ♙xd7 ♖xd7 41 ♖f4 ♖h8 42 ♖g4 ♖e8 43 ♖xb6 ♖h4 44 ♖f3 ♖xa4 45 ♖b8 ♖d7?! 46 ♖a8 ♙h4 47 e4 ♙f6 48 ♖d3 ♖b7 49 ♖b8 ♖d7 50 ♖c2 ♖a3 51 ♖b3 ♖a1? 52 ♖f3! ♖b7 53 ♖xf6 ♖b5 54 ♖c3 ♖f1+ 55 ♙g3 ♖g1+

56 ♙h4 1-0

Exercise 11: White to move
Korchnoi-Yusupov
Horgen 1995



I originally had the feeling that this exercise was rather difficult but it seems that this is not the case. The important factor is that none of White's pieces other than the knight needs improving, and as there is no reason to alter the pawn structure this should be done immediately.

14 ♘d1!

Prefacing ♘d1 with 14 h3 is an alternative but as ...♙g4 does not appear to be a very strong move there is no need for White to be side-tracked.

14...♙g4 15 e4

White has a clear advantage. One of the keys to this position is that the g2-bishop is guaranteed to become a strong piece, particularly after Black's light-squared bishop has been exchanged. Therefore the text serves to gain space for White. His bishop is waiting on g2 but, as this is not a position with mutual attacks, this is okay. It has the potential to be enormous on c4 or d5, for example.

15...c6

15...♔d7 16 ♘e3 c6 17 dxc6 ♙xc6
18 ♘f5 ♖e6 19 ♜fd1 leaves White in
total control.

16 ♘e3

Also possible, and probably better, is
16 dxc6! ♜fc8 (16...♜ac8 17 ♖d3! ♜fd8
18 cxb7 and White wins a pawn) 17
cxb7 (17 ♖d3 ♜xc6 offers Black
chances of resistance) 17...♖xb7 18
♘c3 ♙c5 and, although Black has
gained some compensation for the
pawn, White should remain on top.
This is a good time to mention what
Alekhine said – *the best players will always
trade in a material advantage for a positional
advantage, as the latter is much easier to play.*
This is the reasoning for Korchnoi's
move.

16...cxd5 17 ♘xg4 ♘xg4 18 exd5
♜ae8 19 ♜fe1 ♘f6 20 ♖b3

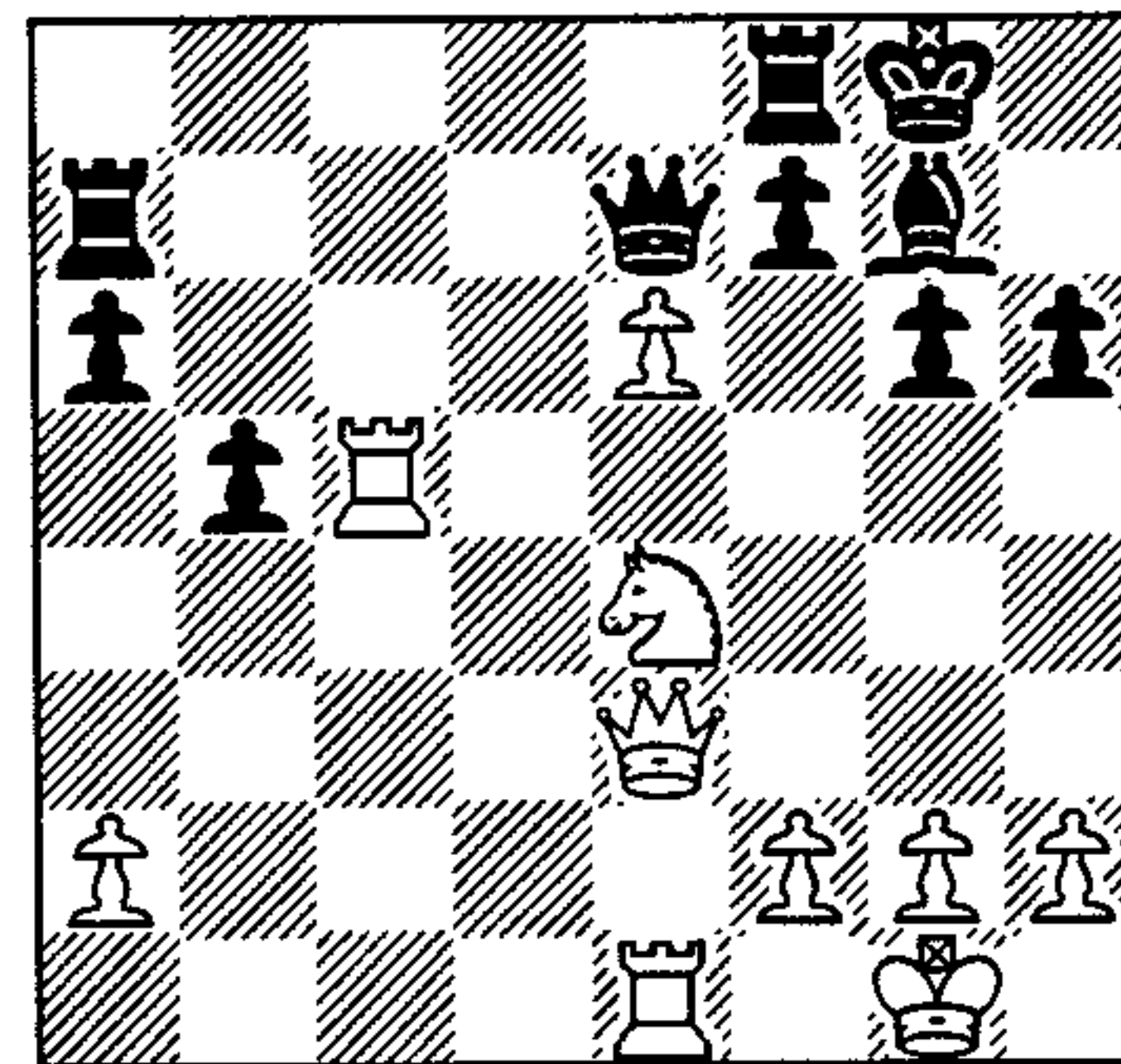
White has some advantage.

20...♖d7 21 ♜e2 ♜e7 22 ♙a5 ♜fe8
23 ♙c3 h5

Black is back in business, but
23...♖f5 was better.

24 ♖c4 ♖f5 25 ♜ce1 ♜c8 26 ♖b3
♜ce8 27 ♙b4 ♖d7 28 ♙d2! ♙c5!?
29 ♙g5 ♖f5 30 h4 e4 31 ♖c2 ♜c7
32 ♙xf6 ♖xf6 33 ♜xe4 ♜xe4 34
♜xe4 g6 35 ♖d2 ♜e7 36 ♜c4 ♙d6
37 ♙h2 ♜e8?! 38 f4!? ♙g7 39 ♙f3
♙g8 40 ♙g2 ♙g7 41 ♖c3 ♜e7 42
♖c2 ♜e8 43 a3 ♙g8 44 ♖b3 ♜e7
45 ♜c8+ ♙g7 46 ♖b6 ♙d7 47 ♙e4
♙e7 48 ♖xf6+ ♙xf6 49 ♙f3 ♙d6
50 ♙e2 ♜c7 51 ♙d8 ♙e7 52 ♜a8
♙d7 53 ♙f3 f5 54 ♙d3 ♙d8 55 ♜a7
♙d7 56 b4 ♙b8 57 ♜a8 ♙d8 58
♙c4 ♙d6 59 a4 ♜c8!? 60 a5 ♜xc4
61 ♜xb8 ♜xb4 62 ♙g8 ½-½

Exercise 12: White to move
Kamsky-Kramnik
Lucerne 1993



White has a number of factors in his
favour here but his pieces do not co-
ordinate too well. Fortunately this is
easily taken care of. The most obvious
is the knight, which needs to find a bet-
ter square. On e6 the knight will com-
pletely dominate Black (g7, f8 and d8)
and keep the e-file closed, until that
very special moment when the knight
moves and Black suffers a serious inva-
sion. Therefore we should first improve
the advanced rook as it occupies the
transit square.

24 ♜c6!

Here the rook is now perfectly placed
and will be relatively undisturbed be-
cause it is on a light square (where
White is in control). Already a6 is under
pressure, while g6 is also a potential
target, and in the meantime the e6-
square is under control.

24...fxe6

Black cannot accept a passed pawn in
the heart of his position (a reasonable
blockade is unlikely) and 24...♜c7 25
♜xa6 is clear.

25 ♘c5 ♖f7 26 ♘xe6 ♜e8 27 ♖b3!

Escaping the pin and staying in con-
trol over the light squares. An impor-
tant effect of this move is that ...a6-a5,
which Black is aching to play, has now
been ruled out.

27...♙h8 28 g3 ♖f5 29 ♜e2

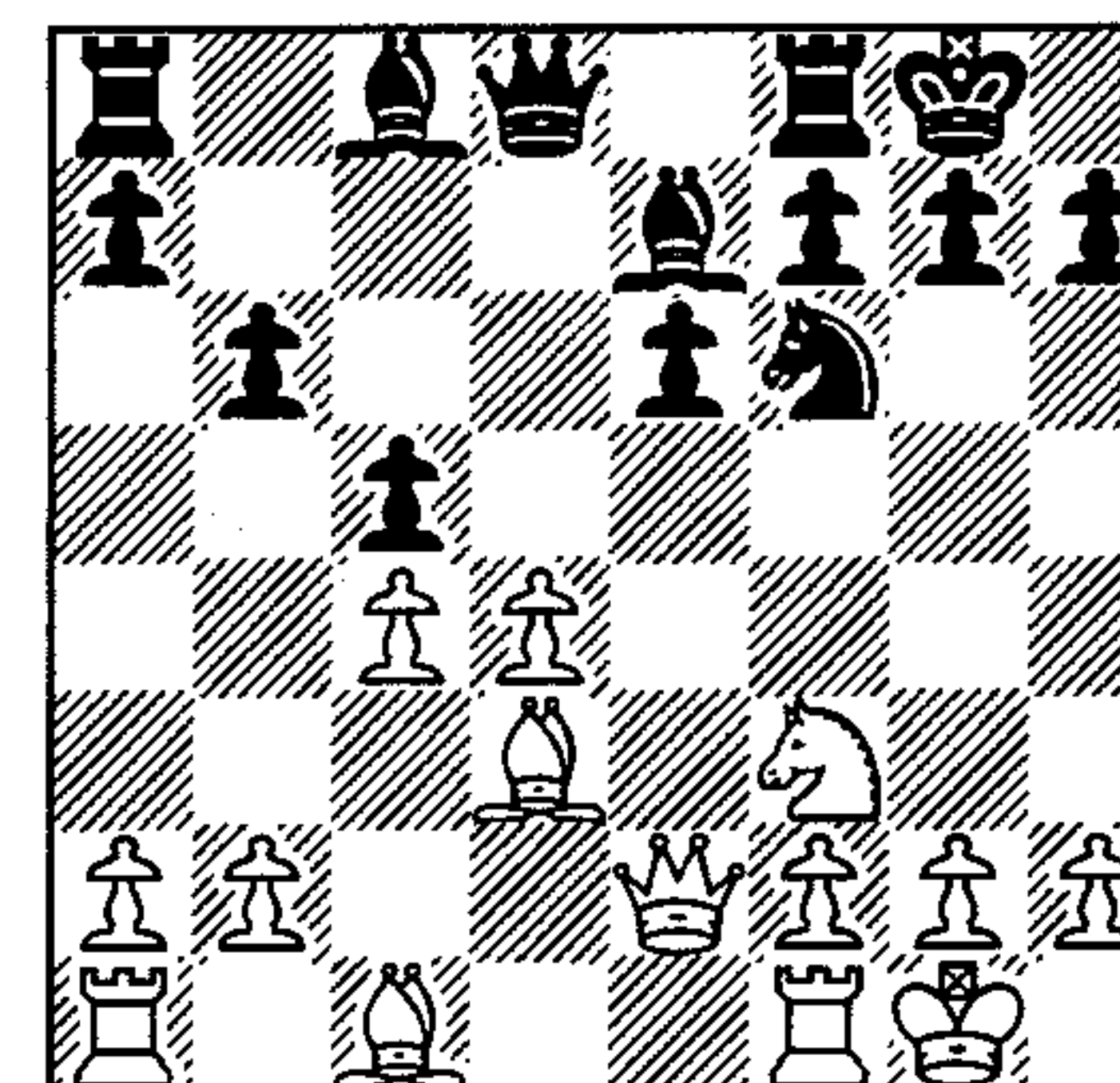
Planning ♘xg7.

29...♜ae7 30 ♜xa6

And the winner is...

30...♙f6 31 ♜e3! ♙h7 32 ♜f3 ♖e5
33 ♘f4 ♖b2 34 ♖d3 ♜e4 35 ♙g2
♖d4 36 ♖xb5 ♜e7 1-0

Exercise 13: White to move
Gelfand-Ljubojevic
Linares 1993



White needs to develop the three re-
maining pieces. Black also needs to de-
velop three pieces. First we should try
to decide where the rooks belong. In
the game Gelfand insists that the best
posts are a1 and d1, which seems
slightly odd to me. I think the right
squares are d1 and e1 in view of the
open files. Or at least d1 and f1, with
the potential to use e1 should there be
time. Make up your own mind, the an-
swer is not carved in stone. But the big
question for White is what should be
done with the dark-squared bishop.

There are two natural squares for this
piece but neither is ideal. On g5 the
bishop is well placed but, because Black
has no issues in the centre, ...♔d7 will
most likely come. The second option
for the bishop is b2, but b2-b3 slightly
damages White's pawn structure as it
weakens the dark squares. It is easy to
imagine something with ...♙f6 being
very annoying later. Gelfand discovered
that e5 is the Christmas square. How-
ever, I have my doubts about his move.
Additionally, we should never forget
how our opponent wants to place his
forces. Therefore we quickly realise that
all his pieces have only very limited pos-
sibilities. The c8-bishop belongs on b7,
the queen's rook on d8 (c8) and the
queen on c7. We would, of course, be
happy to do something to disturb
Black's set-up, as well as to help our-
selves.

12 ♜d1!?

Gelfand gives this an exclamation
mark, but I prefer 12 ♙f4! cxd4 13
♜ad1 as a more natural set-up. Or even
the simple 13 ♜fd1 if this is the desired
pattern. Moreover Gelfand's suggestion
in the next note indicates that I am cor-
rect.

12...cxd4?!

12...♖c7! is Gelfand's suggestion as a
more flexible try. Perhaps Ljubojevic
had not anticipated White's next move.

13 ♙f4!

Now matters soon become difficult
for Black, whose queen has no good
squares.

13...♙c5?

13...♙b7 14 ♘xd4 ♖e8! was practi-
cally forced according to Gelfand. We
see now the problems Black experiences

with space after White took control over c7. (14...♖c8 15 ♔f5 is very unpleasant for Black).

14 ♖e5 ♖b7 15 ♗xd4 ♗d7 16 ♗b3!

A key move. Black cannot do anything about the e5-bishop in view of ♖xh7+ etc.

16...♗g5

16...♖e7 17 ♖xh7+ ♗xh7 18 ♖d3+ is a pawn worth taking.

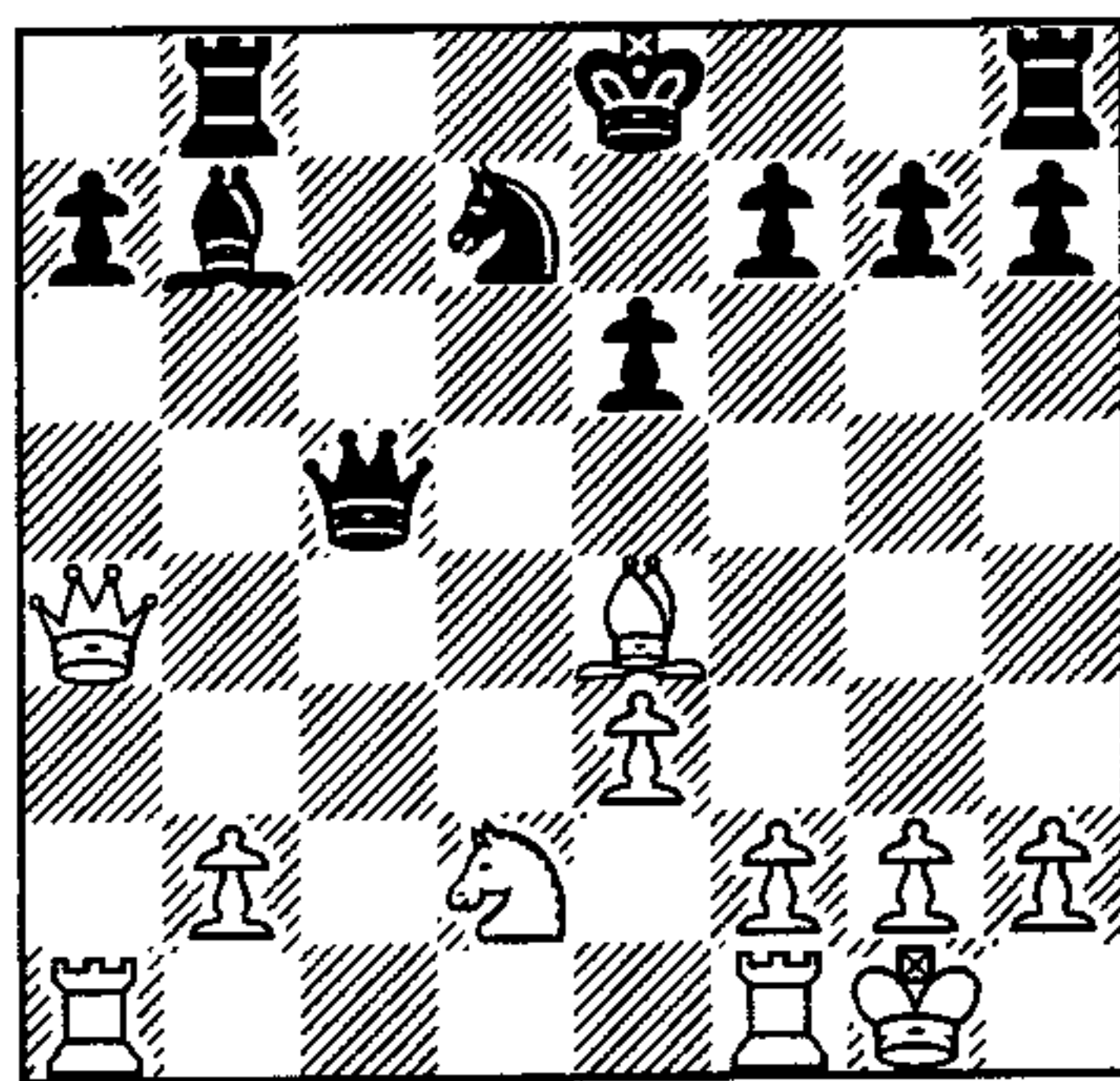
17 ♖g3 ♖ad8 18 ♗xc5 ♗xc5 19 ♖c2

White has a clear advantage due to his control over the dark squares.

19...f5!? 20 f3 f4 21 ♖f2 e5 22 b4! ♗d7 23 c5 bxc5 24 bxc5 ♖h8 25 h4!+- ♗h5 26 ♖b5 ♖xf3 27 gxf3 ♖xf3 28 ♖d3 ♖g4+ 29 ♖h2 e4 30 ♖xe4 ♗f6 31 ♖g2 ♖e2 32 ♖xd8 ♖xd8 33 ♖g1 g6 34 ♖e1! ♖c4 35 ♖f1 ♖e8 36 ♖b3 ♖xc5 37 ♖b2 ♖g7 38 ♖c3 f3 39 ♖xf6+ ♖h6 40 ♖d2+ ♖h5 41 ♖d5+ ♖xd5 42 ♖xd5 ♖e2+ 43 ♖g3 1-0

**Exercise 14: Black to move
Gelfand-Anand**

Biel 1993



This position is razor sharp. The key

issue in solving this regards the primary concept. As some of you might not have read my book, or have it clear in your memory, then let me redefine primary concepts with this position as an example. Instead of calculating from the beginning (setting Fritz on to the task, for example) we should figure out what we want to do. We have the advantage over a computer in that we know what we want to calculate. Here the key thing for Black is to get the king to safety, so we should figure out how to do it. Fortunately we can make it work directly!

18...0-0!

There are simply no alternatives to this move. I am sure that if you suggested any, it was with a feeling that it really did not work...

19 ♖xd7

Others fail to trouble Black. 19 ♖ac1 ♖d6 20 ♗c4 ♖e7 is equal and 19 ♖xh7+ ♗xh7 20 ♖xd7 ♖d5! gives Black full compensation for the pawn. The bishop is very strong and the heavy artillery is well placed. Note that 20...♖d5! is a classical example of unforcing play. Instead of forcing the issue Black improves his position without taking captures and threats into consideration.

19...♖fd8 20 ♖xh7+!

This was White's surprise. If you saw both this and the best reply, then you should get out and play some tournaments!

20 b4 ♖b6! 21 ♖e7 ♖xd2 22 ♖xb7 ♖xb7 23 ♖xa7 ♖xe7 24 ♖xe7 ♖b2 leads to a draw, while 20 ♖ac1 ♖b4 21 ♖c4 ♖xc4 is also fine for Black!

20...♖xh7?

Forced was 20...♖f8! 21 ♖a4 ♖xd2

and Black's activity will be enough to compensate for the pawn. All of White's pieces could find better squares...

21 ♖xf7 ♖xd2?!

21...♖xg2! 22 ♖xg2 ♖xd2 (22...♖g5+ 23 ♖h1 ♖xd2 24 ♖g1 helps White; Gelfand provides a winning line, but we have already seen enough) 23 ♖xe6 ♖b6 24 ♖e4+ ♖g6+ 25 ♖h1 and White is a pawn up!

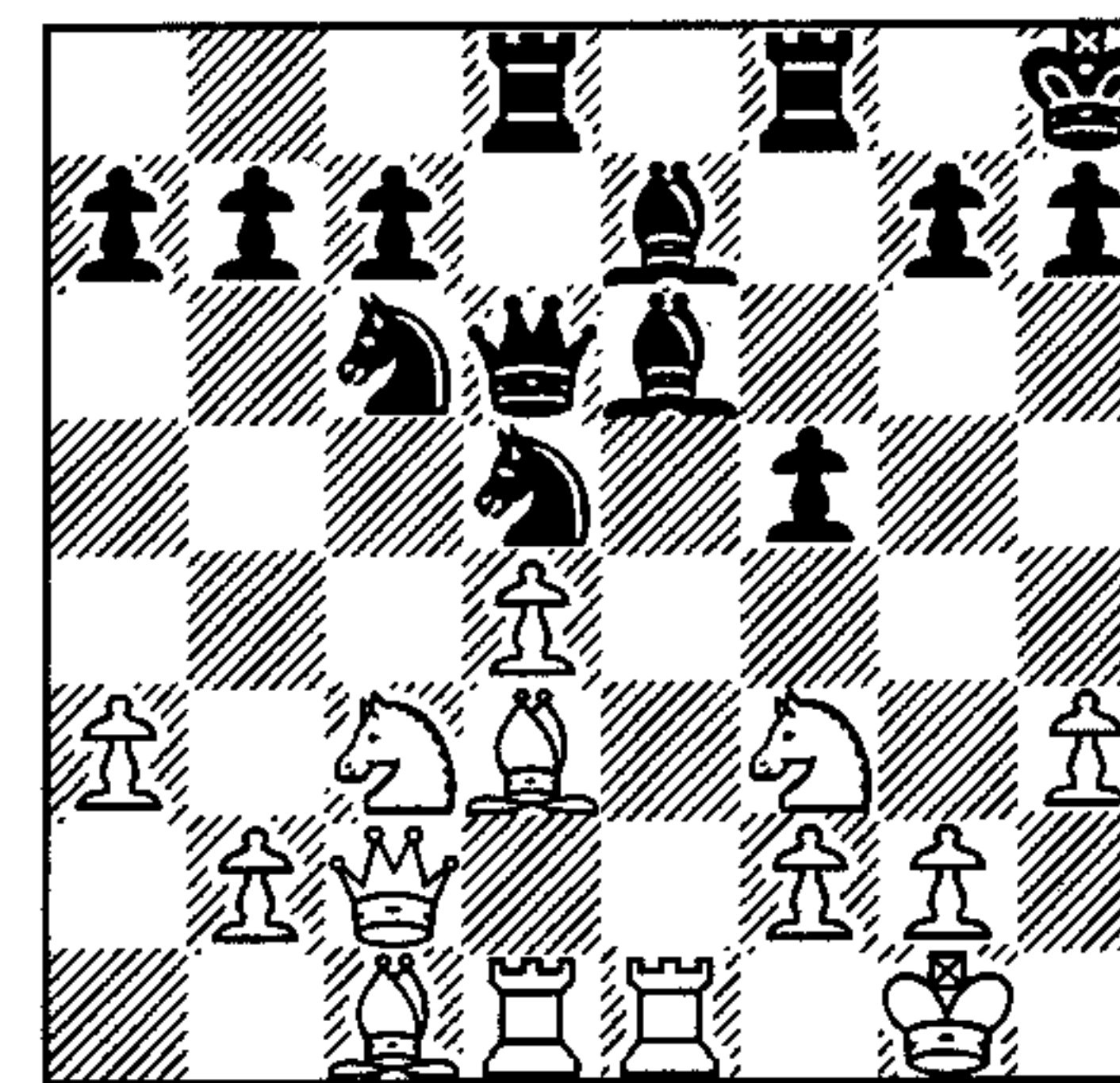
22 ♖a4! ♖g5 23 g3!

White wins the queen!

23...e5 24 ♖h4+ ♖xh4 25 gxh4 ♖d6 26 h5 ♖e4 27 ♖e7 ♖bb6 28 ♖xe5 ♖e6 29 ♖f4 1-0

**Exercise 15: White to move
Gelfand-Adams**

Candidates 1994 (4th game)



White stands much better. None of his pieces can be said to be really inactive and he has no weaknesses. Black, on the other hand, is not very well coordinated and has problems on the e-file in particular. White's d1-rook would be most useful on the e-file. The exercise has a lot in common with the theories in Dorfman's new book *The Method in Chess*. There he states quite logically

that when one player has considerable room for improvement in his position while the other has very little else to improve, then the latter should consider immediate action. This is such a case. And the weaknesses to be attacked are on the light squares, starting with e6.

17 ♖e2! ♖f6 18 ♖de1 ♖c8

18...♖g8? 19 ♗b5 and Black loses. After 18...♖de8 19 ♖xf5 Black is also in bad shape.

19 ♖c4!

Brilliant. The pressure on the light squares continues with a clear advantage as a result. Here White uses the weakness of d5 to eliminate the pressure against d4.

19...♗xc3

19...♗b6? 20 ♗b5 ♖d7 21 ♖e6 is the tactical justification of White's play. 19...♗f4 20 ♖xf4 ♖xf4 21 ♗d5 ♖d6 22 ♗xf6 ♖xf6 23 d5 is also very unpleasant for Black.

20 bxc3 h6 21 a4?!

Gelfand prefers 21 h4, probably with the idea of h4-h5 and a continued attack on the light squares, as well as the possibility of ♗f3-g5!? with a lot of entertainment.

21...b6 22 h4! ♗a5 23 ♖a2 c5 24 ♗g5! ♖a6?!

24...♖c7! 25 dxc5! bxc5 26 ♗e6 ♖xe6 27 ♖xe6 ♖xh4 28 ♖xf5 with advantage to White. But this was better than what follows.

25 ♖e6 ♖d7 26 ♖xf5!! ♖xg5

26...hxg5 27 hxg5.

27 ♖g6! ♖f7

If instead 27...♖f6 then 28 ♖e8+ ♖f8 29 ♖b1.

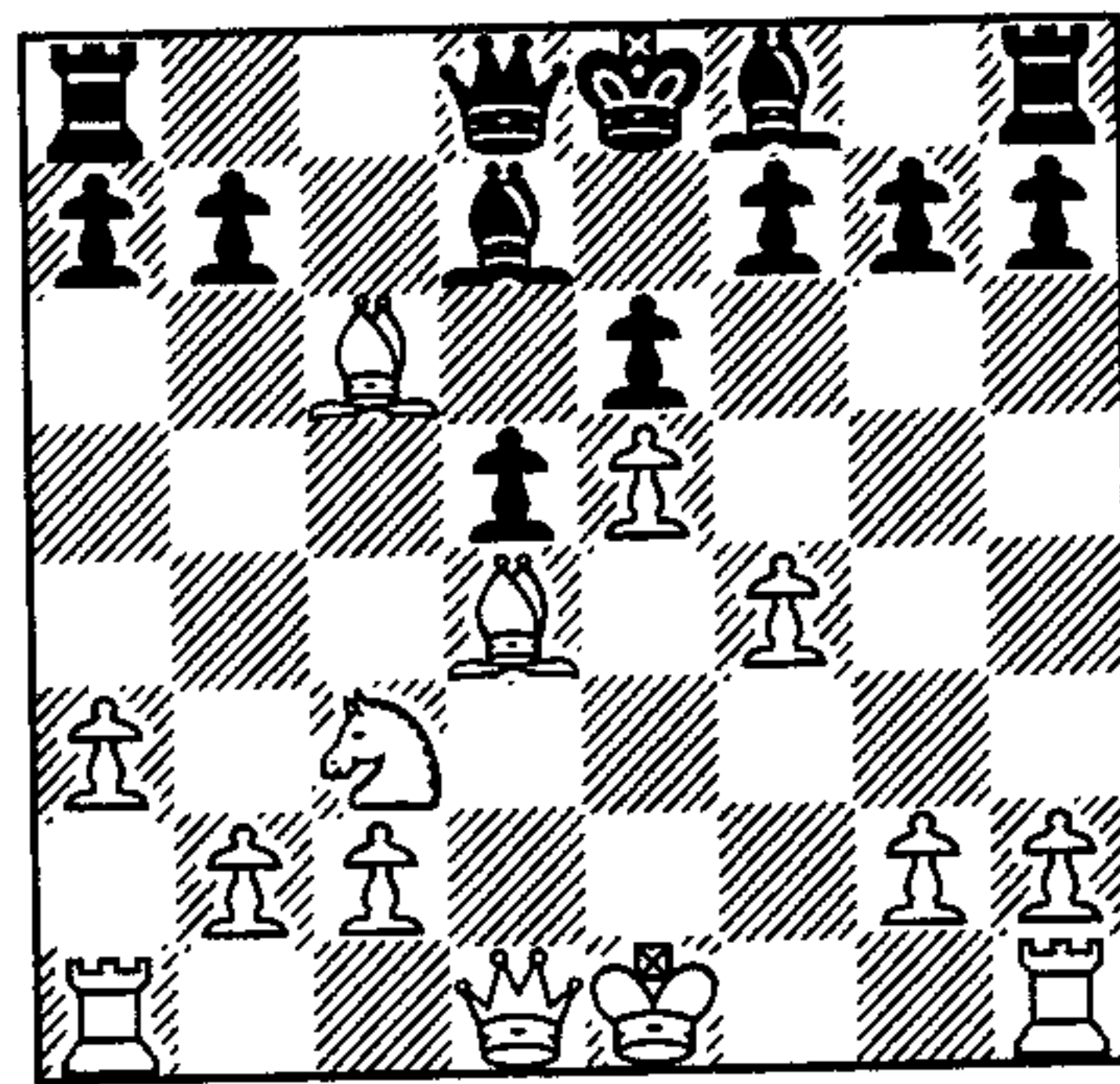
28 ♖xf7 ♖xf7 29 hxg5 cxd4 30 cxd4

30 g6!? was also possible, with the idea of 30...♖ff8 31 ♔xh6! gxh6 32 ♖e7 and a clear win.

30...♔c4 31 ♖e8+ ♖xe8 32 ♖xe8+ ♔h7 33 ♔b1+ g6 34 gxh6 ♘c6 35 ♔e3 ♖e7 36 ♖c8 ♔d5 37 ♔d3 ♘b4 38 ♔e2 ♔e6 39 ♖d8 ♘d5 40 ♔g5 ♖d7 41 ♖e8 ♔f7 42 ♖b8 ♔e6 43 ♔f3 ♖f7 44 ♖d8 ♖f5 45 ♔d2 ♘f6 46 ♖a8 g5 47 ♖xa7+ ♔xh6 48 ♖a6 ♘d7 49 a5 ♖b5 50 axb6 1-0

Exercise 16: Black to move Gelfand-Adams

1994 Candidates (6th game)



This is one of these cases where you need to make a really tough decision between two kinds of positions – a hopeless position and something close to Pandora's box. The real exercise is to realise that, positionally, you cannot live with a static position, and therefore you will have to try something else. This of course means that you will have to see the line I am talking about, and have the will to find the unforcing moves that stamp your will on to the position. Enough talk, here is the solution:

13...♔xc6?

After this mistake Black is in serious

trouble as his bishop is poor and the structure invites an attack. So the king stays put in the centre, where it has nothing to do.

The only chance was 13...bxc6! 14 ♘a4 ♖a5+ 15 c3 c5 16 ♘xc5 ♔xc5 17 b4 which, thus far, you should be able to see. You should also know that this is one of those positions where you can bend your immediate forcing tendencies. Open Pandora's box and disappear in the mist... 17...♔xd4!! (17...♔xb4 18 axb4 is terrible – obviously) 18 bxa5 ♔xc3+ 19 ♔f2 0-0 20 ♖c1 ♔xa5 followed by ...f7-f6 and Black has good counter-chances in a practical game, if not in the analysis.

14 0-0

The rest is just suffering for Black.

14...g6 15 ♖d2 ♖c7 16 ♖f3 b6 17 ♘d1! h5 18 a4! ♔c5 19 ♖c3 ♔e7 20 b4! ♖b7 21 ♖b3 ♔d7 22 ♘e3 ♖c8 23 a5?! ♔b5! 24 axb6 a6! 25 ♖c3 ♔d7?

25...♖xc3! improves.

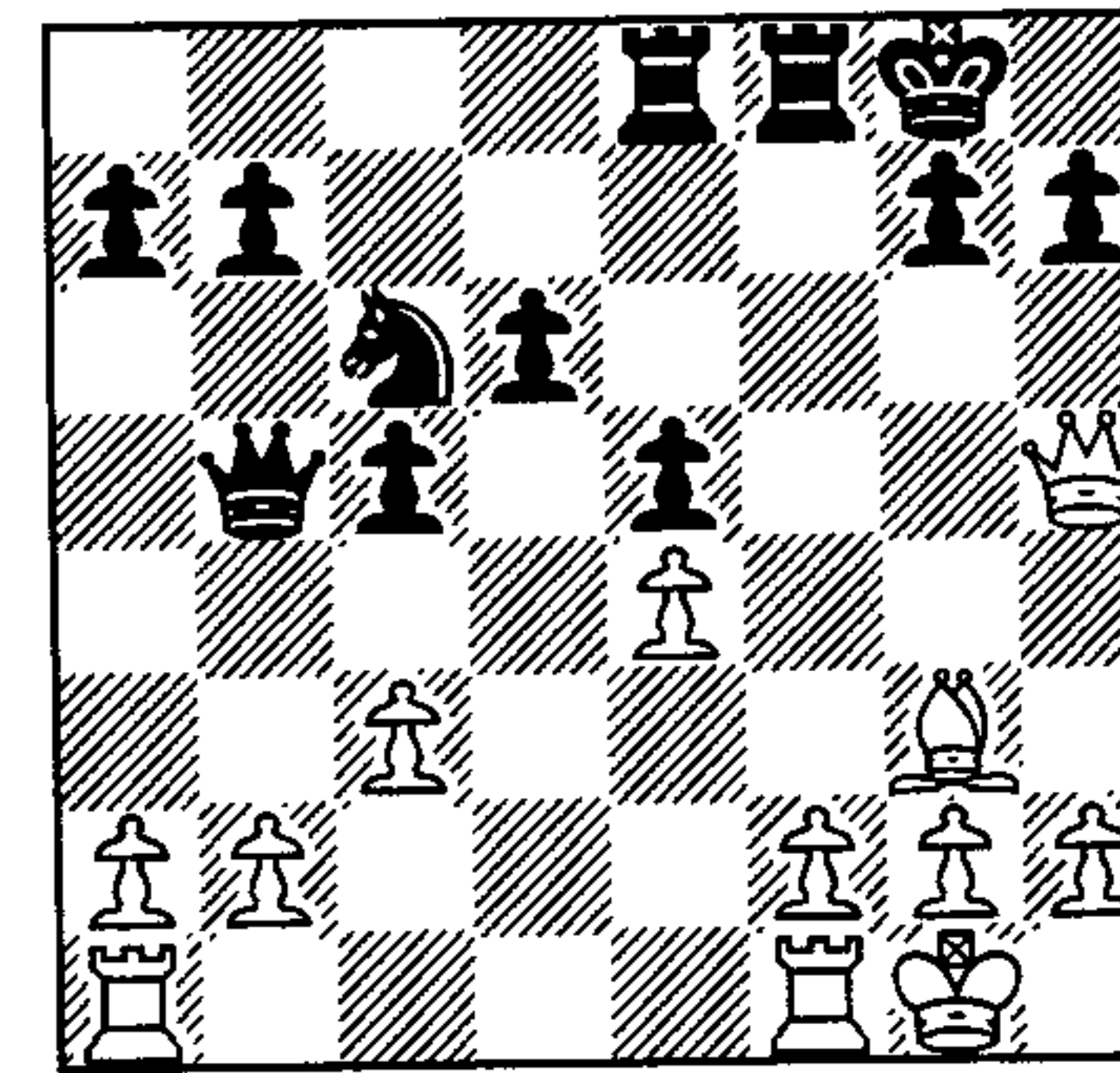
26 ♖c5! ♖xc5 27 bxc5

The move 27 ♔xc5! is more to the point.

27...♖c8 28 c4 dxc4 29 ♖c1 ♔e8 30 ♘xc4 ♖d5 31 ♘a5 ♔c6 32 ♔e3 ♖e4 33 ♘xc6 ♖xc6 34 h3?! ♖b5 35 ♖c2 ♖c6 36 ♔h2 a5 37 ♖a1 ♖a8 38 ♖a4 h4 39 ♖a2 ♖b5 40 ♖c4 ♖c6 41 ♖a2 ♖b5 42 c6! ♖xc6 43 ♖xa5 ♖b8 44 ♖a7 ♖e4 45 ♖b3 ♔f8 46 ♖d7 g5 47 ♖d4! ♖f5 48 ♖c4! ♖b7 49 ♖c8+ ♔g7 50 ♖c7 gxf4 51 ♔d4! ♖e4 52 ♖f3 1-0

Exercise 17: White to move Gelfand-Adams

1994 Candidates (8th game)



This is a really interesting position and difficult to evaluate. Luckily we do not need to do so to find the best move! But anyway, let us resort to one of the old methods of evaluation. Where should the pieces be placed? White, for sure, wants the queen's rook on d1, while the queen could go to d7 or d2 and the bishop – who knows? White needs to somehow break a hole in Black's centre, or forever live with a bad bishop. But in the position White is under attack.

17 ♖fb1!

The only move that helps White in his quest to obtain his favourite piece placement. Now the idea is ♖g5-d1-d2 followed by f2-f3 and ♖b1-d1 (maybe), with ♔g3-f2 and b2-b4 in some positions.

Less good is 17 ♖ab1 ♖c4! and here we actually do not need to know any more, even though it is nice to assure oneself that the rook endgame after 18 ♖d1 ♖d8 19 ♖d5+ ♖xd5 20 exd5 ♘e7 21 ♔h4 ♖d7 22 ♔xe7 ♖xe7 is slightly preferable for Black thanks to the f-file and the prospects of an invasion on the 4th rank. Note that 21 c4 ♘f5 is hardly an alternative here, when Black stands

better due to both the knight's superiority and the structural advantages.

17 b3 ♖d3 is just plain bad and the interesting 17 ♖d1!? does not work out well after 17...♖xb2 18 ♖xd6 ♖xc3 19 ♖d5+ (19 ♖ac1 ♖d4 20 ♖d5+ ♖f7!) 19...♖f7 20 ♖ac1 ♖d4 21 ♖xc5 ♖d8 22 ♖xd4 ♖xd4 and the game is on its way to a draw. One way could be 23 f3 ♖d2 24 ♖f2 ♖d1+ 25 ♖f1 ♖d2 etc.

17...♖c4 18 ♖e1 b5 19 ♖g4!?

19 ♖e2?! would be a positional mistake, as explained above.

19...♖e6 20 ♖e2 ♖b8 21 a4 bxa4?

An improvement is 21...b4 22 a5! with an unclear struggle ahead. Now White comes out on top (22 ♖ed1 ♘a5!).

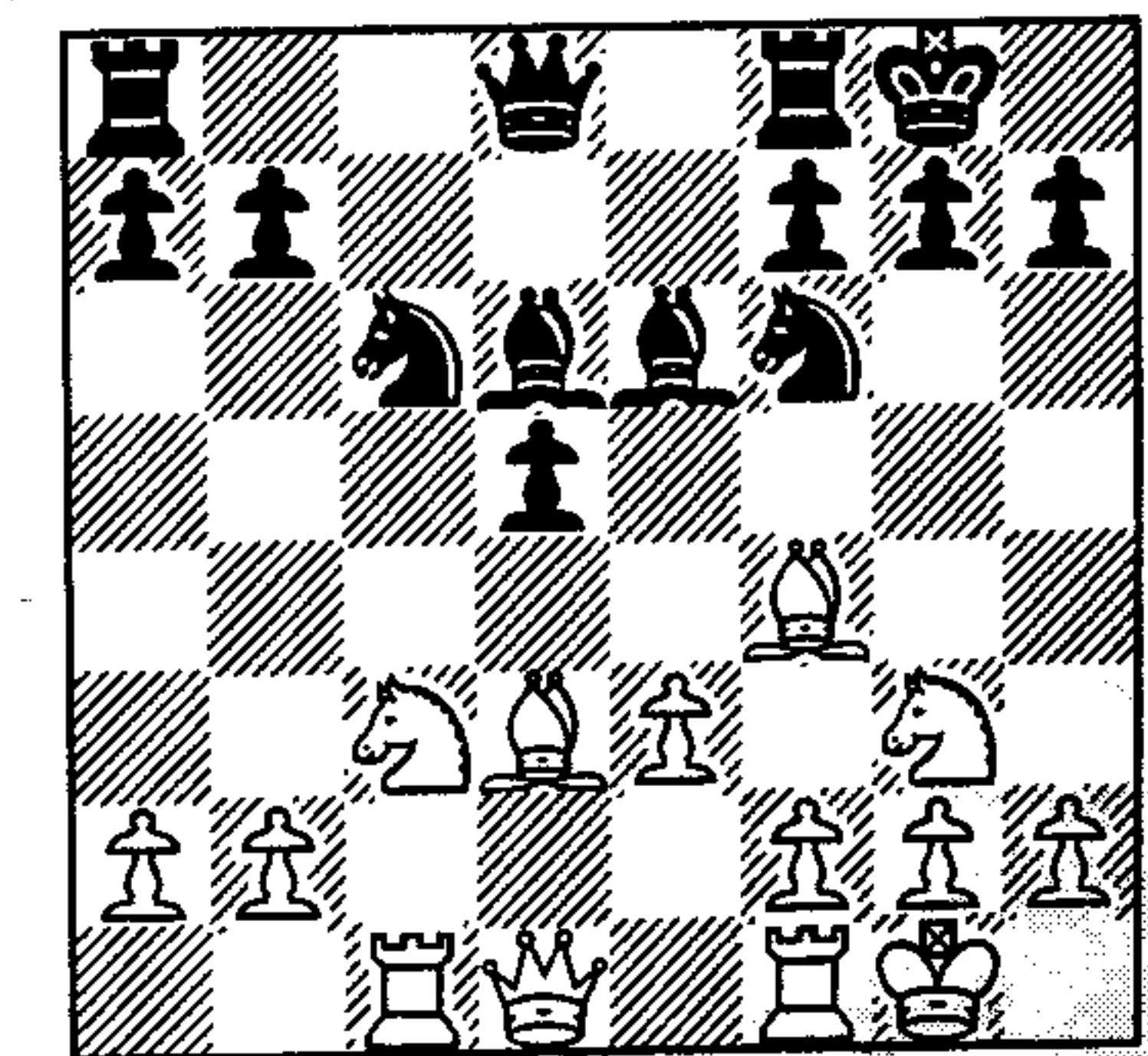
22 ♖a6! ♖b6 23 ♖xa4

White has some advantage.

23...♖b3? 24 ♖xb3+ ♖xb3 25 ♖ed1! ♖xb2? 26 ♖xd6 ♖fb8 27 h3 ♖8b6 28 ♖d5 a5 29 ♔xe5 ♖b1+ 30 ♖xb1 ♖xb1+ 31 ♔h2 c4 32 ♔d6 a4 33 ♖f5 h6 34 ♖f8+ ♔h7 35 ♖a8 ♖b3 36 e5! ♖xc3 37 e6 1-0

Exercise 18: White to move Gelfand-Kasparov

Linares 1994



Here the primary concept is control over the dark squares in the centre. The light-squared bishops each cover their diagonal (b1-h7 and a2-g8) and do not contest each other. But the fight for d4, e5 and f4 is hard. The appropriate course for White, then, is to bring his pieces into this fight as quickly as possible. The logical way to do this is to start with the knights.

13 $\text{Ng}2!$

13 $\text{Nh}5!?$, as played in Kasparov-Yusupov, Linares 1993, is also a good move, but the text is stronger.

13... $\text{Bc}8$

Black cannot win the fight for the dark squares and instead begins to complete his development.

13... $\text{d}4$ 14 $\text{exd}6$ $\text{Wxd}6$ 15 $\text{Nb}5$ fails for Black and 13... $\text{exf}4$ 14 $\text{Nxf}4$ $\text{d}4$ 15 $\text{Nxe}6$ $\text{fxe}6$ 16 $\text{exd}4$ $\text{Qxd}4$ 17 $\text{Bb}1$ gives White a position in which the bishop is superior to the knight and where the e-pawn is a slight weakness. All in all not a pleasant position for Black.

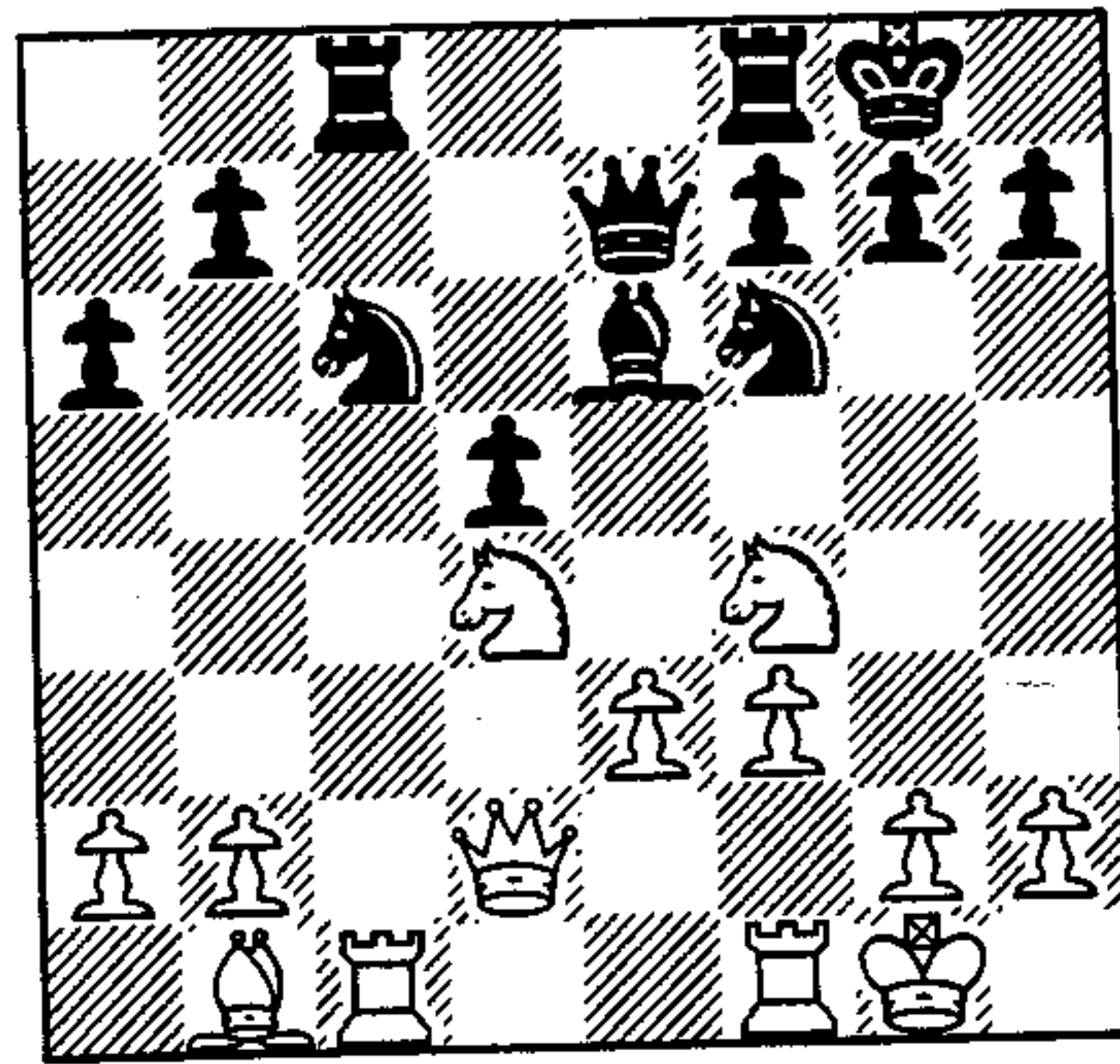
14 $\text{Bb}1$ $\text{exf}4$

I dislike this move and in the game it also seems to turn out badly. Of course these things are linked for me as I have seen what happens, and perhaps Kasparov had not. From a static point of view Black should consider preventing $\text{Qc}3$ - $\text{b}5$ - $\text{d}4$ with 14... $\text{a}6!?$ and simultaneously retain the tension.

15 $\text{Nxf}4$ $\text{Bg}4$

White is seriously considering taking this bishop all the time. This move provokes a weakening of White's structure but, as we shall see, this can also be used positively, so one starts to wonder if something like 15... $\text{a}6!?$ was a better move.

16 $\text{f}3$ $\text{Ke}6$ 17 $\text{Wd}2$ $\text{Ke}7$ 18 $\text{Nb}5$ $\text{a}6$
19 $\text{Nd}4$



White has a solid edge here. His pieces are very well placed and Black will continually have problems with the d5-pawn. White also has the possibility of an advance on the kingside.

19... $\text{Ne}5$ 20 $\text{b}3$ $\text{Nd}7$ 21 $\text{g}4$

White has established a positional advantage and cannot further improve his position much more, so now it is time for the attack. Black is probably worse here but should still be able to defend.

21... $\text{Ng}6$ 22 $\text{Ng}2$ $\text{Ne}8$ 23 $\text{Bxc}8$
 $\text{exc}8$ 24 $\text{Bc}1$ $\text{Nd}6?$

24... $\text{Nd}7$ was better.

25 $\text{exg}6!$

Picking up a pawn.

25... $\text{hxg}6$ 26 $\text{Nf}4$ $\text{Ke}8$ 27 $\text{Nxd}5$
 $\text{Wg}5$ 28 $\text{Nf}4$ $\text{Ke}5$ 29 $\text{Ng}2$ $\text{g}5$ 30
 $\text{Wb}4$ $\text{Nb}5$ 31 $\text{Nxb}5$ $\text{axb}5$ 32 $\text{Wd}4$
 $\text{Ke}7$ 33 $\text{Wc}5$ $\text{Wf}6$ 34 $\text{Wxb}5$ $\text{Nd}8$ 35
 $\text{Ke}2$ $\text{Ke}6$ 36 $\text{Wf}2$ $\text{Nd}3$ 37 $\text{h}4$ $\text{gxh}4$
38 $\text{Nhx}4$ $\text{g}5$ 39 $\text{Ng}2$ $\text{Ke}5$ 40 $\text{Wc}2??$

White has missed some easy wins because of time trouble and now fails completely. Winning was 40 $\text{e}4$ $\text{Wd}6$ 41 $\text{Ke}1$ $\text{Nd}2$ 42 $\text{Ke}2$ $\text{Nd}1+$ 43 $\text{Ne}1$ $\text{Nd}7$ 44 $\text{e}5$ $\text{Ke}7$ 45 $\text{Ke}3$ and White will eventu-

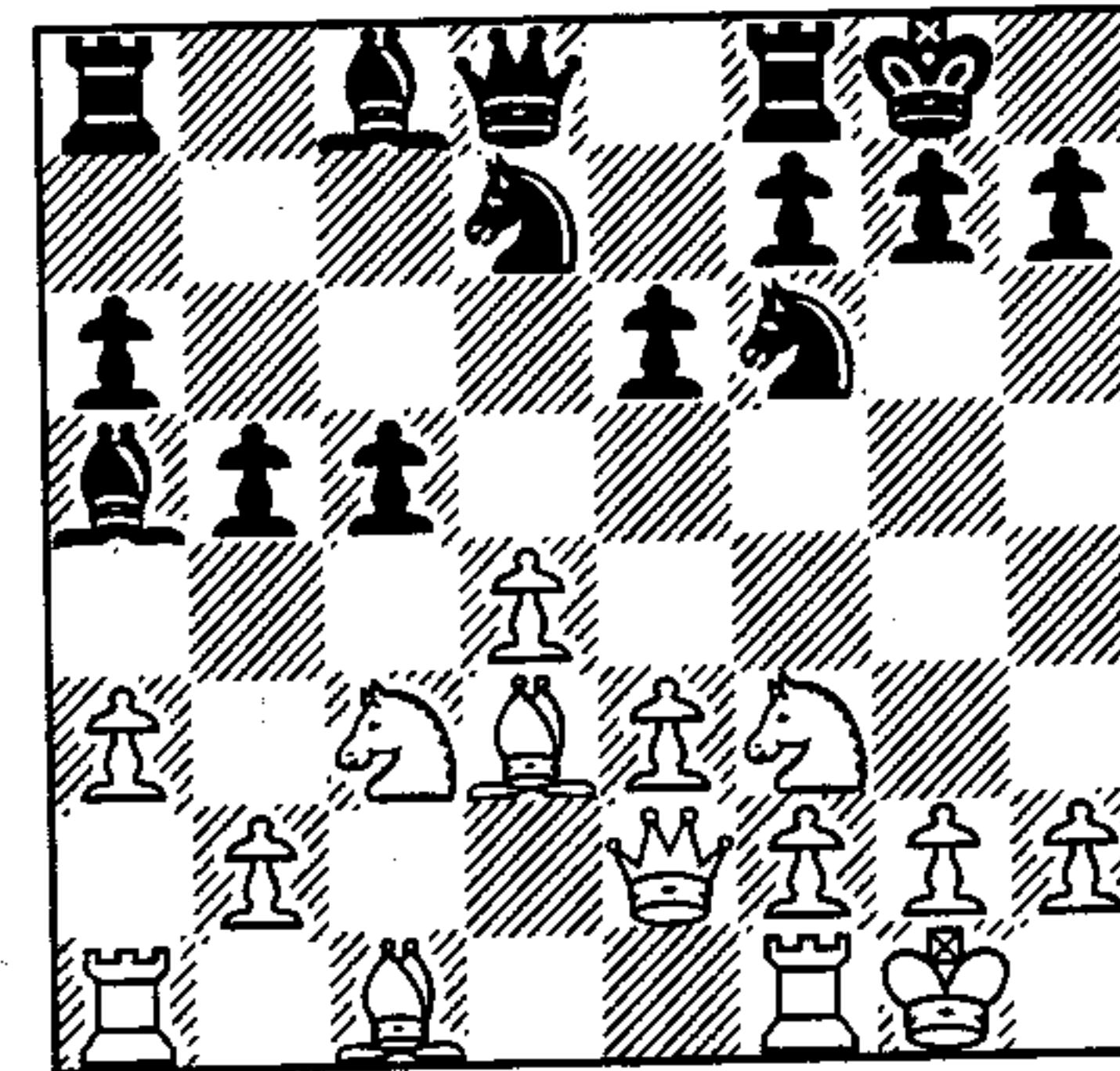
ally untangle.

40... $\text{Wd}6$ 41 $\text{Ne}1$ $\text{Kxe}3$ 42 $\text{Wf}2$ $\text{Ke}5$
43 $\text{Ng}2$ $\text{Ke}2$ 44 $\text{Ke}1$ $\text{Kxf}2$ 45 $\text{Kxe}5$
 $\text{Kxf}3$ 46 $\text{Ne}3$ $\text{Nd}7$ 47 $\text{Kxg}5+$ $\text{Qf}8$
48 $\text{Nf}5$ $\text{exf}5$ 49 $\text{gxh}5$ 1/2-1/2

Exercise 19: White to move

Gelfand-Epishin

Dos Hermanas 1994



Dorfman's aforementioned book has one very interesting observation. He noted that there often arises a situation in which one player can improve his pieces easier than the other, and the correct reaction to this, should you be the one unable to improve your position significantly, is to react quickly. This position is such a case. But how? Well, White should see two things – the tactic which is really plain to see and the ideal square for the c3-knight on d6. This should make it possible to find the right execution of the combinational idea.

12 $\text{b}4!$ $\text{cxb}4$ 13 $\text{Nxb}5!$

After 13 $\text{axb}4$ $\text{exb}4$ 14 $\text{Nxb}5$ the bishop on b4 protects d6 – hence the reversed order of moves. Without this point the exercise is not solved.

13... $\text{Bb}7$

There are no ways to equalise, or even get near! 13... $\text{Bb}8$ 14 $\text{Nd}6$ is good for White and 13... $\text{b}3$ 14 $\text{Nd}6$ $\text{Nd}5$ 15 $\text{Nd}2!$ $\text{exd}2$ 16 $\text{Wxd}2$ $\text{Nf}6$ 17 $\text{Nc}4$ $\text{Nd}7$ 18 $\text{a}4!$ $\text{Bb}8$ 19 $\text{Bfb}1$ $\text{Wc}7$ 20 $\text{Nfe}5$ gives White the dark-squared control he needs to rule the centre and round up the black b-pawn.

13... $\text{axb}5?$ 14 $\text{axb}4$ seems to win a pawn and after 13... $\text{bxa}3?$ 14 $\text{Nd}6!$ both the a-pawns will presumably fall and White will have the two bishops.

14 $\text{Nd}6$ $\text{exf}3$ 15 $\text{Wxf}3$ $\text{Nc}7$ 16 $\text{Nb}7!$

By gaining time White picks up the b-pawn. Now, with the bishop pair and an extra pawn, White is on the way to a good result.

16... $\text{Ke}7$

16... $\text{Wc}8$ 17 $\text{axb}4$ $\text{Nd}5$ 18 $\text{Na}5!$ $\text{Nxb}4$ 19 $\text{Ne}4$ and White is doing very well, while 16... $\text{exh}2+$ 17 $\text{Qxh}2$ $\text{Wc}7+$ 18 $\text{Qg}1$ $\text{Wc}3$ 19 $\text{W}e2$ $\text{Wxa}1$ 20 $\text{Bb}2$ $\text{Wa}2$ 21 $\text{Nc}4$ $\text{b}3$ 22 $\text{Ba}1$ sees the queen trapped.

17 $\text{axb}4$ $\text{e}5$ 18 $\text{exa}6$ $\text{exd}4$ 19 $\text{exd}4$
 $\text{Wxb}4$ 20 $\text{Ne}3$ $\text{Bfb}8$ 21 $\text{Bab}1$ $\text{W}e7$
22 $\text{Bb}5$ $\text{Ba}3$ 23 $\text{Nc}6$ $\text{Nb}6$ 24 $\text{Bfc}1$
 $\text{h}5$ 25 $\text{h}3$ $\text{W}e6$ 26 $\text{Bb}5?$

26 $\text{Nc}5$ wins.

26... $\text{Wa}2?$

26... $\text{Nc}4!$ was better.

27 $\text{Wd}1?!$

After this Epishin finds an inventive defence – probably not enough to save the game but, in practice, these things are always difficult.

27... $\text{Nbd}5!!$ 28 $\text{Bc}2$ $\text{Nc}3!!$ 29 $\text{Bxa}2$
 $\text{Bxa}2!!$ 30 $\text{Wf}1$ $\text{Nxb}5$ 31 $\text{g}4$ $\text{Nd}6?!$

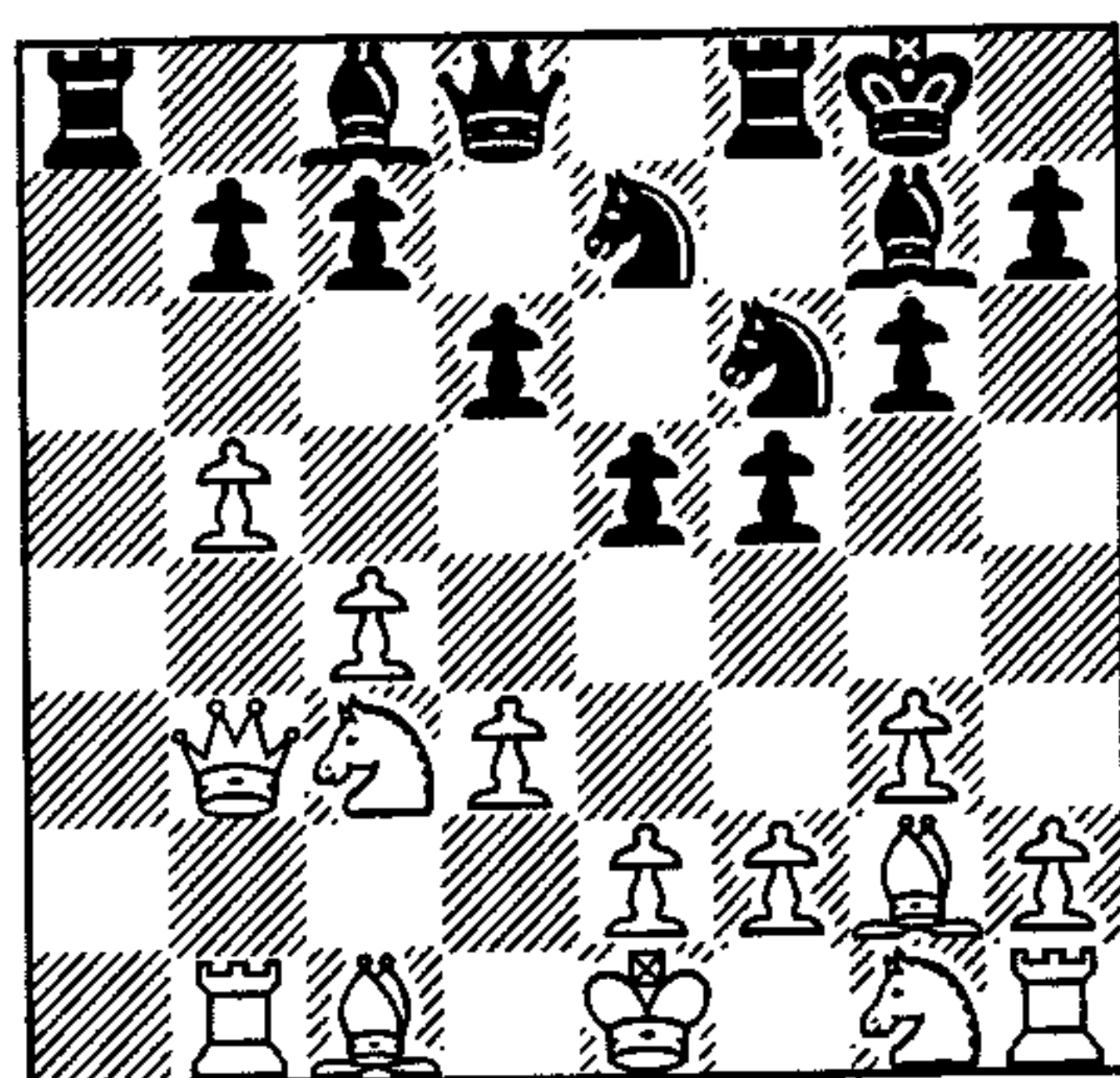
31... $\text{hxg}4!$ 32 $\text{Wxb}5$ $\text{gxh}3$ 33 $\text{Qf}1$
 $\text{Ba}1+$ 34 $\text{Qe}2$ $\text{h}2$ 35 $\text{Wc}4$ $\text{Ne}8$ 36 $\text{Nc}1$
would also give White extremely good

winning chances.

32 ♖xd6 ♗xd6 33 g5 ♜e8 34 g6 ♜f6 35 gxf7+ ♜f8 36 ♖c4 ♖a7 37 ♖e6 ♗d8 38 ♗b5 ♗e7 39 ♖f5 1-0

White won on time. 39...♗f7 40 ♗c4 ♗c7 41 ♗e6 offers White good winning chances according to Gelfand.

Exercise 20: White to move
Savon-Svidler
St. Petersburg 1994



White must develop his kingside. In the event of ♖f3 Black will play ...f5-f4 and ...g6-g5, trying to generate an attack. White can delay this substantially with the aid of a thrust of his own.

12 f4!
Black has no way to equalise.
12...exf4

Look at what the prevention of Black's kingside expansion has done to the e7-knight!

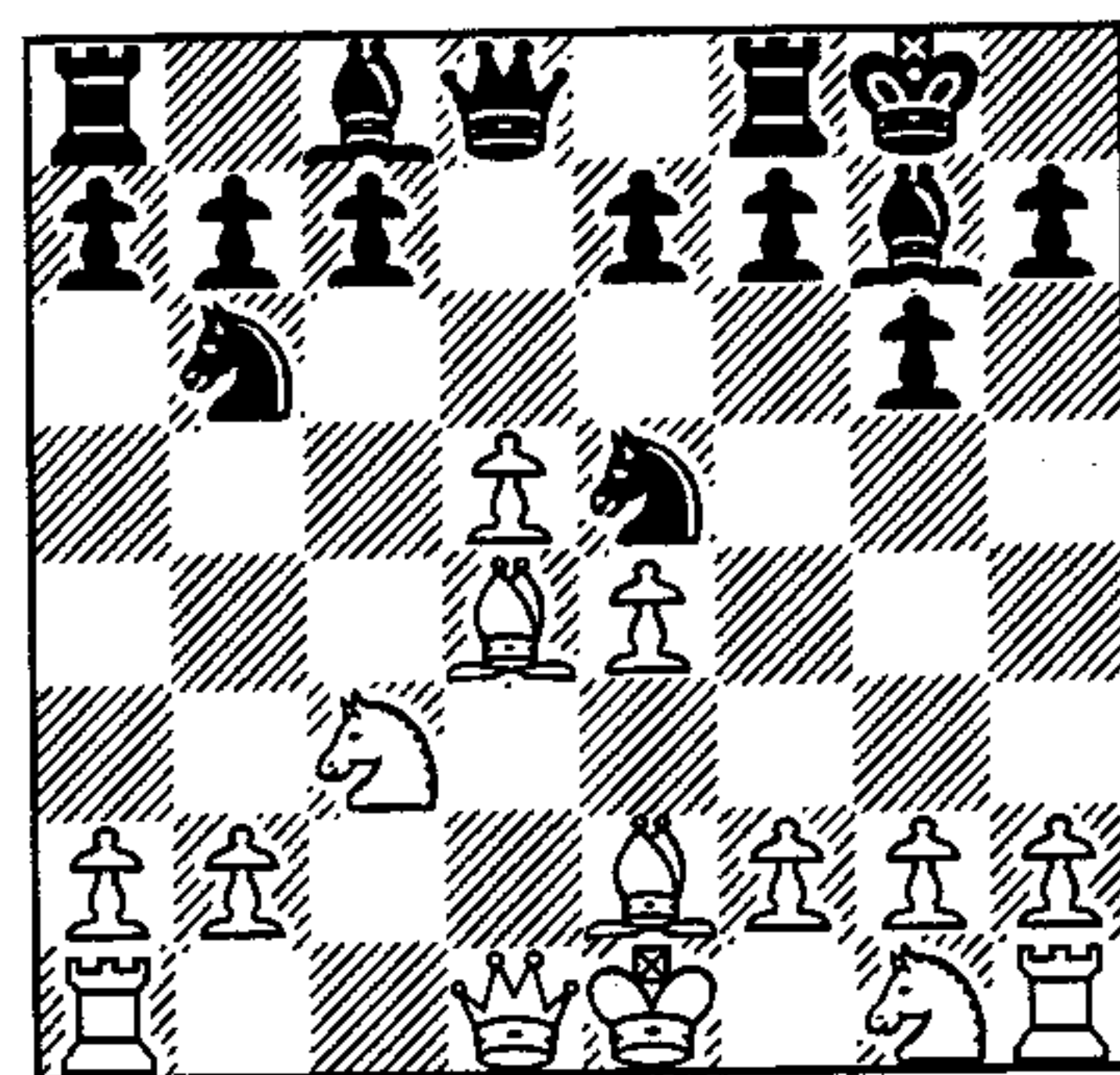
13 gxf4 ♜h8 14 ♜f3 ♗e6!?
Trying to mix it, but without any success.
15 ♜d4 ♗g8 16 ♗xb7 d5 17 c5!

White has a very clear advantage.
17...♖b8 18 c6 ♜g4 19 ♖b4 ♜c8 20 ♜d1! ♖h4+ 21 ♜d2 ♖h3 22 ♗b2 ♗e8 23 ♗e1! ♜xh2 24 ♜c2

♗f7 25 ♗xg7+ ♜xg7 26 ♖d4+ ♜g8 27 ♜c1 ♖h4 28 ♜c3 ♜g4 29 ♜b2

29 ♗xc8! is preferable.
29...♜d6! 30 ♗a6 ♖b6 31 ♜b4 ♜e3 32 ♖h1 ♖f2 33 ♜a2? ♜g4? 34 ♖xf2 ♜xf2 35 ♖hf1 d4+ 36 ♜a3 dxc3 37 ♖xf2 ♖a8 38 ♜a4 ♜xb5 39 e3 ♜d4 0-1

Exercise 21: Black to move
Kacheishvili-Svidler
Szeged 1994



White is threatening to play 11 f4!, 12 ♗xg7 and 13 ♜f3 with complete control of the centre. The knight has nowhere to go from e5 so Black has to act at once, using the only exposed piece White has – namely the bishop on d4. Note that White has good control over most of the light squares with the pawns on d5 and e4 working together with the bishop on e2.

10...c5!
This pawn sacrifice makes it possible for Black to use his slight lead in development to solve his problems.

11 ♗xc5
No alternatives, of course.
11...♜ec4

11...♜bc4? 12 ♖b3 b6 13 ♗d4! was not the idea!

12 ♗xc4
This is forced as 12 ♗xb6 ♖xb6! 13 ♗xc4 ♖xb2 does not suit White's interests. Nor does 12 ♖b3 ♜xb2! 13 ♗c1 (13 ♖xb2? ♜a4 14 ♜xa4 ♗xb2 15 ♜xb2 ♖a5+! wins for Black) 13...♗xc3+! 14 ♖xc3 ♜2a4 when Black retains his lead in development and eliminates the pressure in the centre without losing anything (obviously Black is better here).

12...♜xc4 13 ♖b3 ♜xb2!
White has no control over the light squares and Black should therefore seek to exploit the momentum. It is often the case that when you have a lead in development and are entering tactics you should keep an eye open for any of the opponent's pieces that might be hanging. Remember what John Nunn said: Loose pieces drop off.
14 ♖xb2 ♖c7

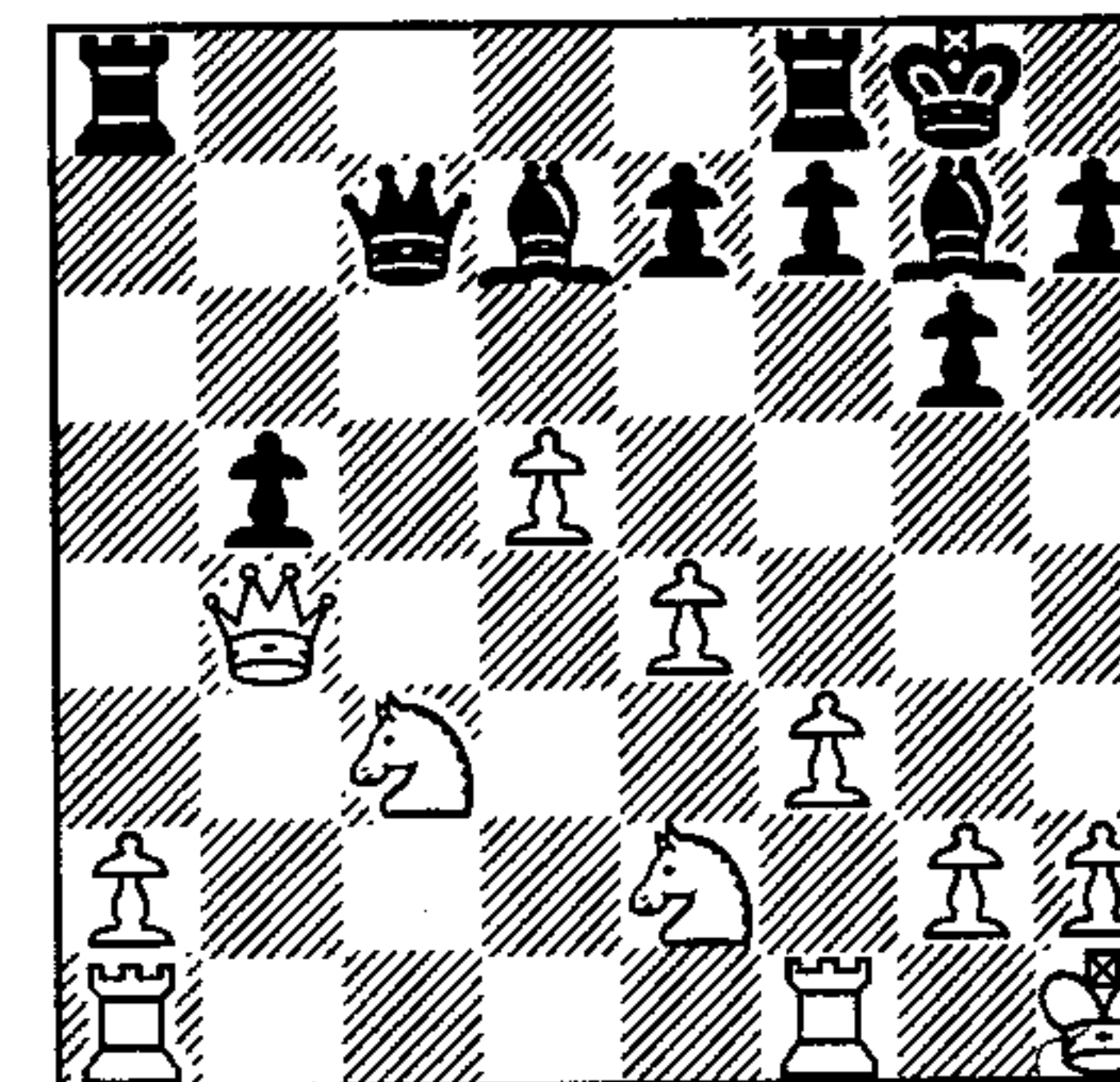
Here the bishop is struggling on c5.
15 ♗b4
15 ♖a3 b6 16 ♗b4 a5 17 ♗c1 axb4! 18 ♖xb4 ♗a6 and Black will soon have a winning attack. All his pieces are playing, none of the White's are...
15...a5 16 ♜ge2 axb4 17 ♖xb4 ♗g4!

Inducing a weakness on the dark squares.
18 f3 ♗d7 19 0-0 b5
Black has good compensation for the pawn.
20 ♜h1?

Better was 20 ♖ab1! ♗fc8 21 ♜xb5 ♗xb5 22 ♖xb5 ♖xa2 and the position remains less clear.

And here is another exercise:

Exercise 22: Black to move
Kacheishvili-Svidler
Szeged 1994



White is only just maintaining a blockade on the dark squares. Although Black is a pawn down he chooses to exchange the queen to be able to use his advantage on the dark squares to the maximum. The thing I find important here is the strength of the g7-bishop, a factor which is not permanent but rather dependent on the long diagonal (and the fact that White has not yet played f2-f4 and e4-e5).

20...♖d6! 21 ♖xd6
Also possible was 21 ♖ab1 ♖xb4 22 ♖xb4 ♗fc8! when Black is not disappointed about trading off his worst piece. Indeed he is happy at the coming invasion on the 2nd rank – 23 ♜xb5 ♗xb5 24 ♖xb5 ♖xa2 25 ♜g1 ♗h6! (when you have the initiative you should try to address certain problems with the time in mind; here the back rank problems are solved at the same time as the bishop threatens to come to e3 to offer valuable support in an attack) 26 f4 ♖cc2 and Black is better.
21...exd6 22 ♖ab1 ♖fb8 23 ♖b4

The rook is a sad blockader, having

none of the flexibility enjoyed by knights, bishops and queens.

23...♖a3 24 ♖c1

White is lost after 24 ♖b3 b4 25 ♖xa3 bxa3 26 ♖b1 ♖b2, when ...♗b5! is coming.

24...♖c8 25 ♖b3

25 ♖xb5 ♖xc1+ 26 ♖xc1 ♖e3! and Black wins.

25...♖xb3 26 axb3 ♖a8!

White cannot keep the rook out forever.

27 ♖b1?

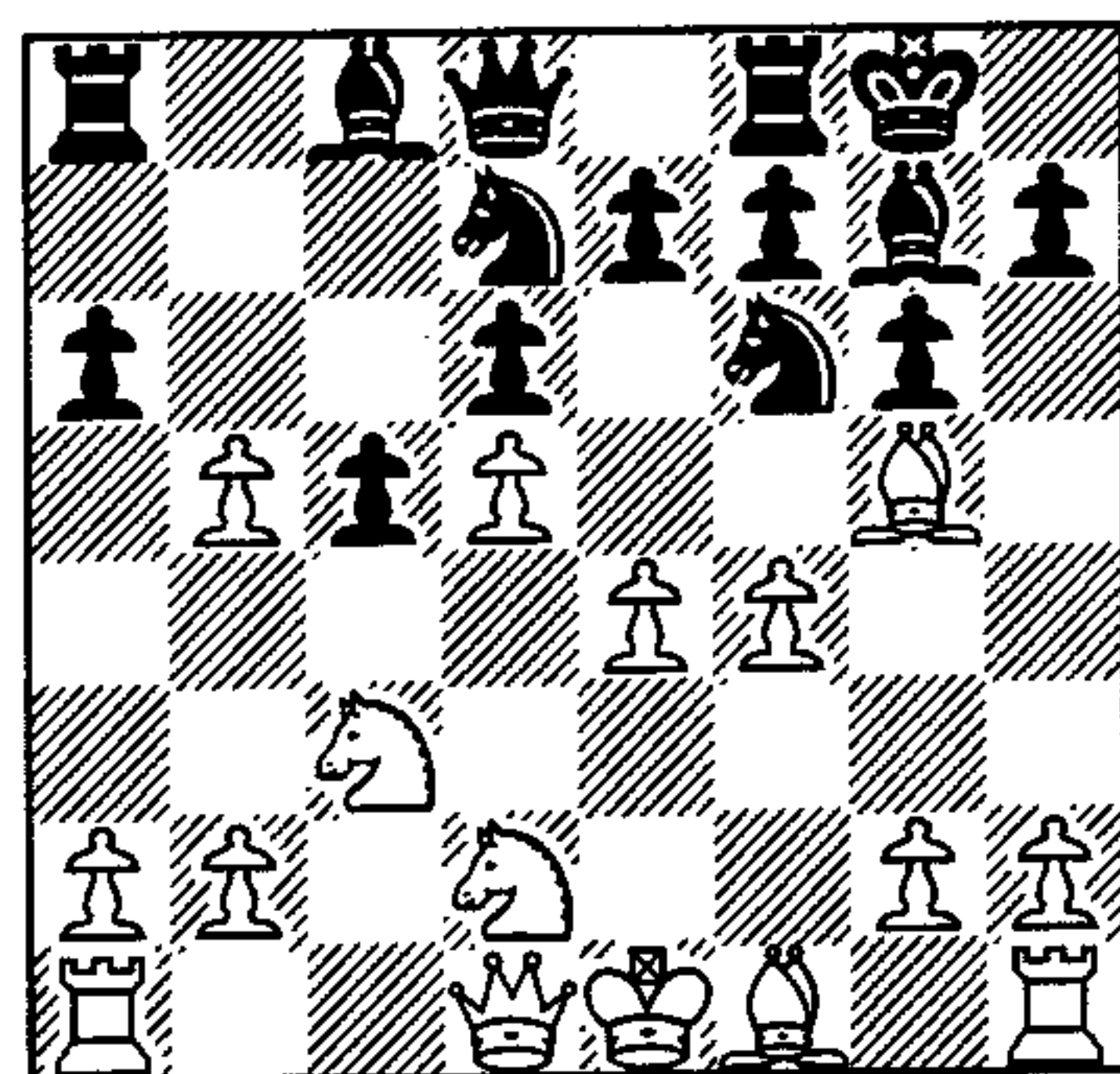
27 ♖c2! ♖a1+ 28 ♖c1 looks fragile, but it was the only chance. The rook is simply too passive on b1.

27...♖a3!

Preparing ...b5-b4, but without wanting the rook to be trapped on the outside. After 27...b4 28 ♖a4 ♖xa4 29 bxa4 ♖xa4 30 ♖c1 White is in a horrible situation but still defending. Now the game is very easy for Black.

28 ♖d1 ♖a2 29 ♖f4 b4! 30 ♖d3 ♖e2! 31 g3 ♖b5 32 ♖xb4 ♖e1+ 33 ♖g2 ♖d4 34 ♖c2 ♖e2+ 0-1

Exercise 23: Black to move
Korchnoi-Nunn
Reykjavik 1988



In this position we have a King's Indian Defence with the variation being the Four pawns Attack. The difference between normal positions from that variation and the specific one here is that White has his bishop on g5. This weakens the dark squares behind the pawns, and this drawback is excellently exploited by Nunn with the following move.

10...♗h5!

Obviously with the threat of ...h7-h6.

11 ♖f3

This is probably the most realistic move, but black can still take over the initiative. Nunn gives the following line 11 g4 f6 12 gxh5 fxg5 13 hxg6 (13 fxg5 ♖e5 14 ♖g1 axb5 15 ♖xb5 c4! 16 ♖xc4 ♖xc4 17 ♖xc4 ♖b6 18 ♖g2 ♖xc3+ 19 bxc3 ♖e3+ and black wins.) 13...♖xf4 14 gxh7+ ♖h8 and the domination of the dark squares as well as the much better placed king secures black an excellent position.

11 g3 h6 12 ♖h4 axb5 13 ♖xb5 ♖a6 14 ♖xa6 ♖xa6 15.0-0 ♖b6 16 ♖b1 ♖b4 is also unclear - Nunn.

11...f6 12 ♖h4 ♖xf4 13 ♖xf4 g5 14 ♖f2

14 ♖xg5 fxg5 15 ♖xg5 ♖e5 would give black a very good compensation because of the strength of his bishop.

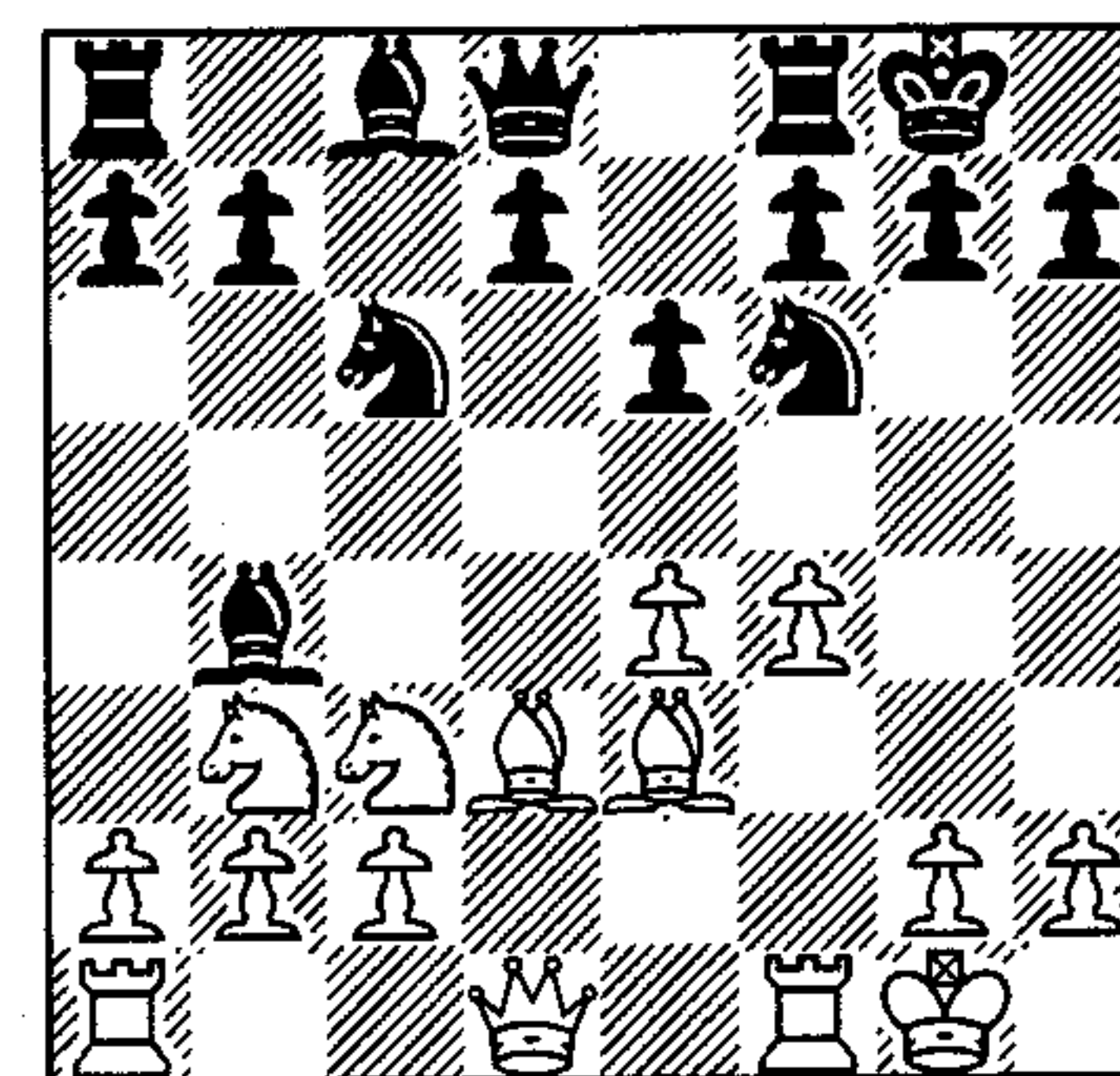
14...gxh4 15 ♖xh4 ♖e5 16 ♖e2 axb5 17 ♖xb5 ♖a5!

Black is better.

18 ♖g3 ♖b4 19 ♖b1 ♖xa2 20 ♖xa2 ♖xb5 21 ♖c3?! ♖a6 22 ♖d1 f5 23 ♖f1 ♖f6! 24 exf5 ♖xf5 25 ♖xf5 ♖xf5 26 ♖c2 ♖h8 27 ♖b3? ♖h6 28 ♖a1? ♖f2+! 29 ♖b1 ♖f1+ 30 ♖c2 ♖xa1 31 ♖xa1 ♖xa1 32 ♖h3 ♖c1+ 33 ♖b3 c4+

34 ♖a2 ♖d3 35 ♖c8+ ♖g7 36 ♖b7 ♖g5 37 ♖e4 ♖f6 38 ♖xd6 ♖g6 39 ♖c8 c3 40 d6 ♖xb2+ 41 ♖xb2 cxb2 42 d7 ♖b4+ 43 ♖b1 ♖c6 44 g4 ♖g5 45 h3 ♖h4 46 ♖b6 h6 47 ♖d5 ♖xh3 0-1

Exercise 24: Black to move
Grünfeld-Svidler
Haifa 1995



For Black it is important that he justifies putting the bishop on b4, otherwise he is simply lagging behind in development. Moreover White's development lead will be used to organise an assault in the centre or on the kingside (probably both), starting with e4-e5. The solution is to give White structural weaknesses and then prevent this advance.

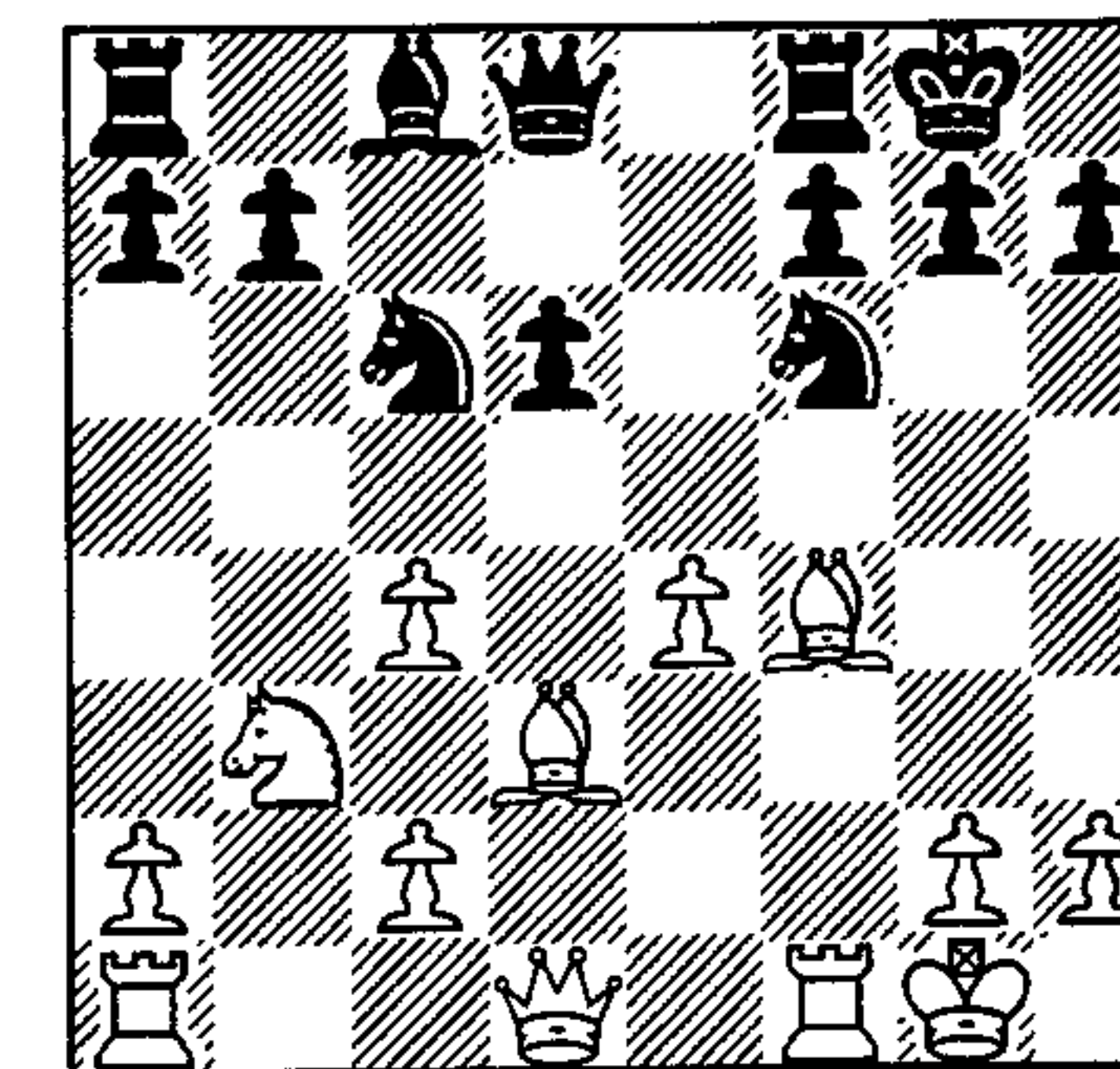
10...♖xc3! 11 bxc3 e5!

The simplest way to prevent e4-e5. Note that this fits in well with ...♖xc3 as there is now no ♖c3-d5 to look out for.

12 c4

12 f5? d5 is just bad, and 12 fxe5 ♖xe5 13 ♖g5 ♖b6+ 14 ♖h1 ♖fg4! 15 ♖e2 ♖g6 16 ♖f4 d6 sees Black assume full control over the dark squares (and limits the scope of the d3-bishop).

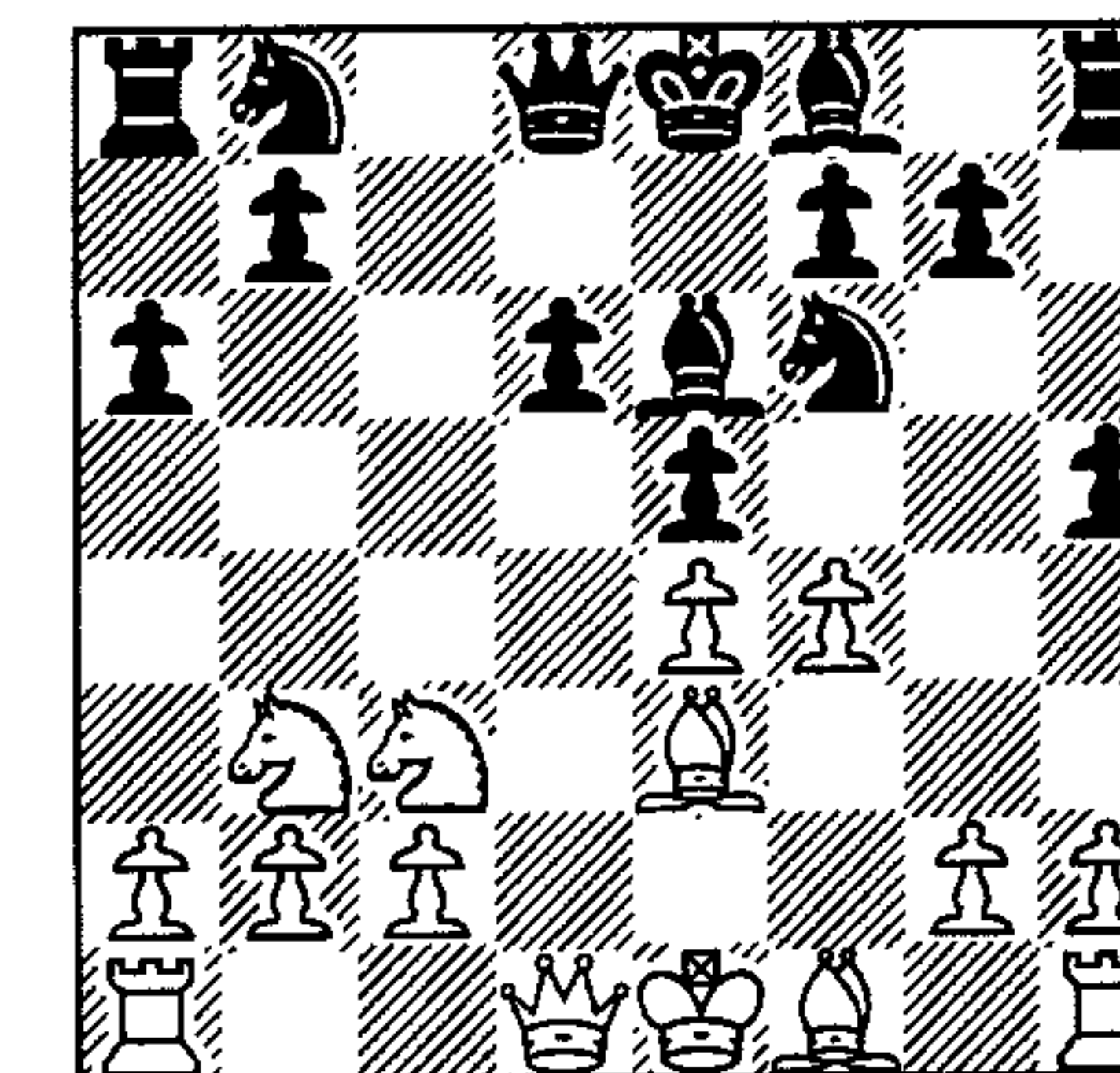
12...exf4 13 ♖xf4 d6



Black is fine thanks to the control over e5.

14 ♖h1 ♖g4! 15 ♖e2 ♖ge5 16 ♖d4 ♖e7 17 ♖b1 ♖xd4 ½-½

Exercise 25: Black to move
Svidler-Sakaev
St. Petersburg 1995



An important feature here is that Black will not be okay in positions such as the one after, for example, 9...exf4 10 ♖xf4 ♖c6 11 ♖d2 ♖g4 12 0-0-0 ♖ge5 13 ♖e2, which is slightly better for White according to Svidler. Actually I think it is worse than that. The control over d5 is clearly more important than e5, as from d5 there are possibilities for

direct hits into the enemy camp. Consequently, traditionally, White is a little better in these positions. Below you will find the game Karpov-Polugaevsky, which goes some way in illustrating this concept.

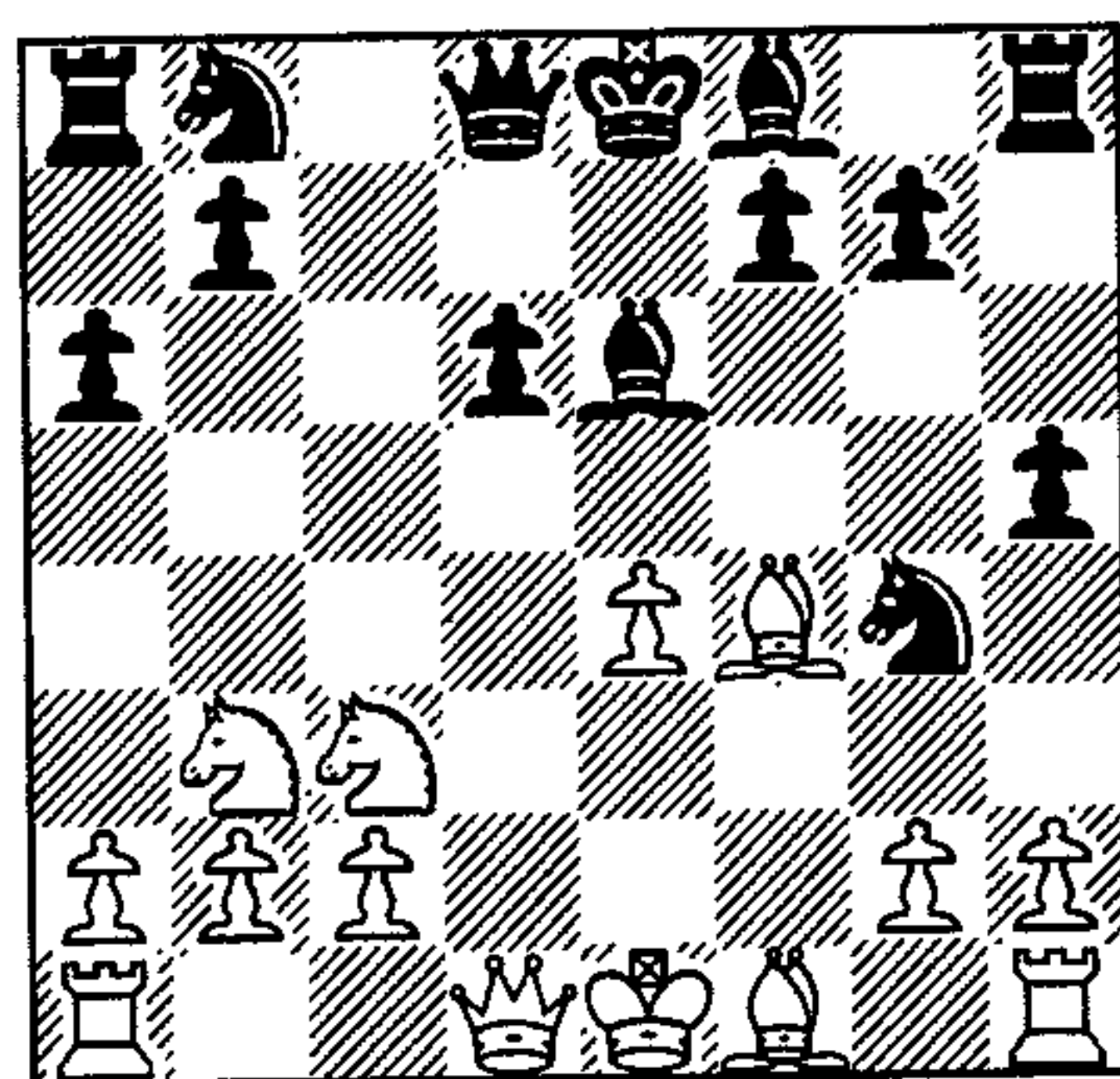
Anyway, in the diagram position the h5-pawn is exposed, so Black is actually worse off than usual because it is not clear where his king belongs.

9...♖c7 10 f5 ♗c4 11 ♗xc4 ♖xc4 12 ♖d3 is also better for White. Look at d5 and b6.

9...♗g4! 10 ♗d2

10 ♖d2 ♗xe3 11 ♖xe3 exf4 12 ♖xf4 ♗c6 13 0-0-0 ♗e7 14 ♖b1 g6 15 ♗d5 ♗g5 16 ♖g3 ♗e5 should be fine for Black. The bishop compensates for the weakness of the king's position.

10...exf4 11 ♗xf4



11...g5!

This move is absolutely essential for the concept. Now Black is able to develop his dark-squared bishop to an active post, while after 11...♗c6 12 ♖d2 ♗ge5 ♗f8 there are problems finding a good place, allowing White to retain the better prospects. The tempo is not so important as Black is playing for static features, something only White has a

good reason to do here.

12 ♗c1 ♗g7 13 h3 ♗e5 14 ♗e3 g4! ½-½

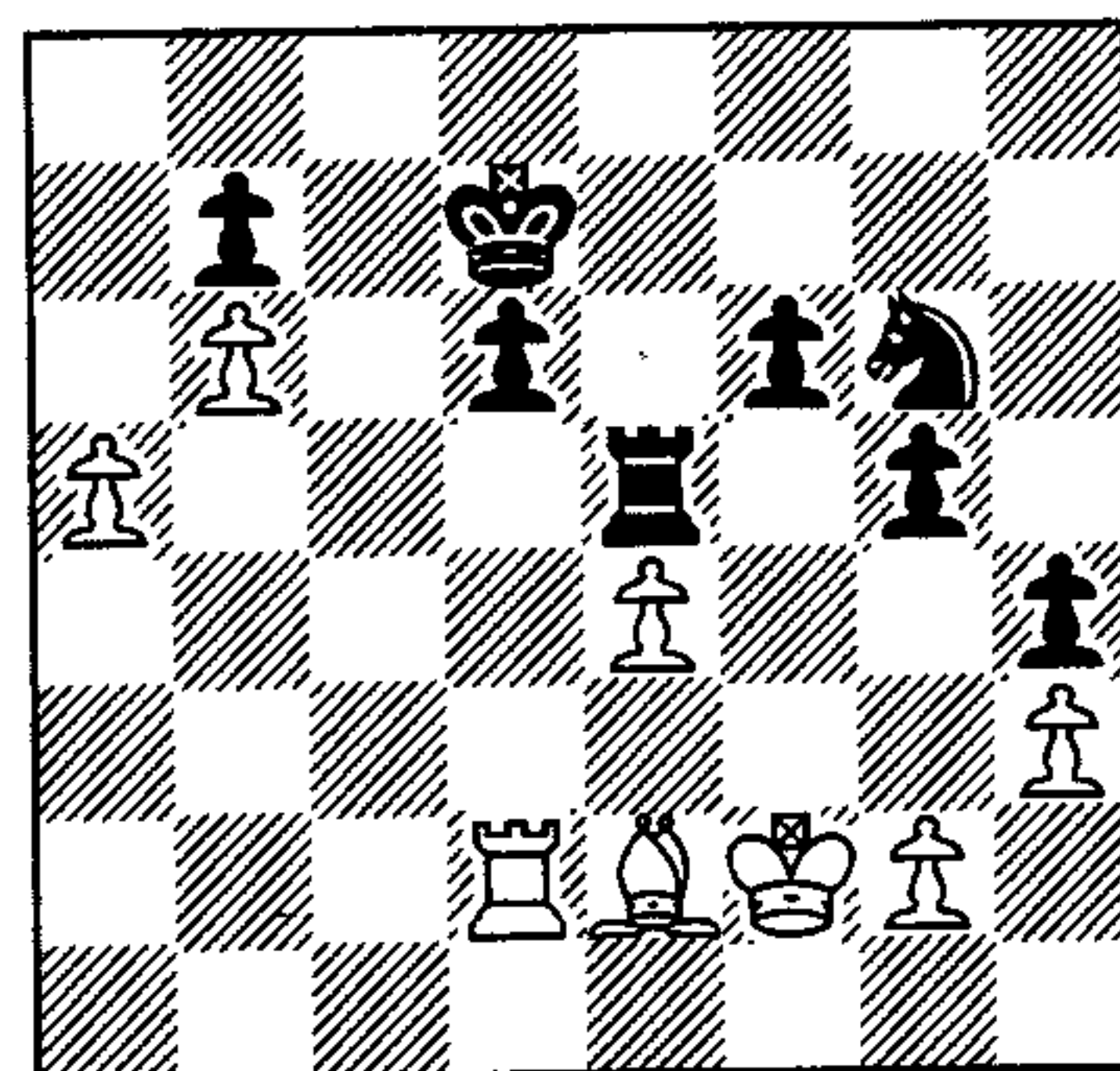
And in this dynamically balanced position the players agreed a draw. Actually I would prefer Black's position as it seems to have more dynamic potential than White's.

Karpov-Polugaevsky

Candidates, Moscow 1974

Sicilian Defence

1 e4 c5 2 ♗f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♗xd4 ♗f6 5 ♗c3 a6 6 ♗e2 e5 7 ♗b3 ♗e7 8 0-0 ♗e6 9 f4 ♖c7 10 a4 ♗bd7 11 ♖h1 0-0 12 ♗e3 exf4 13 ♖xf4 ♗e5 14 ♗d4 ♖ad8 15 ♖g1 ♖d7 16 ♖d1 ♖e8 17 ♗f5 ♗d8 18 ♗d4 ♗g6 19 ♖ff1 ♗e5 20 ♗f4 ♖c5 21 ♗xe6 ♖xg1+ 22 ♖xg1 ♖xe6 23 ♗f3 ♗eg4 24 ♖gf1 ♗b6 25 ♖d2 ♗e3 26 ♗xe3 ♗xe3 27 ♖b1 ♖f8 28 ♖g1 ♖c7 29 ♖f2 ♗c4 30 ♖d3 g5 31 h3 h5 32 ♗d5 ♗xd5 33 ♖xd5 ♗e5 34 c3 h4 35 ♖bd1 ♖e7 36 ♖1d4 f6 37 a5 ♖c6 38 ♗e2 ♖d8 39 c4 ♖c7 40 b4 ♗g6 41 b5 axb5 42 cxb5 ♖c2 43 b6+ ♖d7 44 ♖d2 ♖xd2 45 ♖xd2 ♖e5

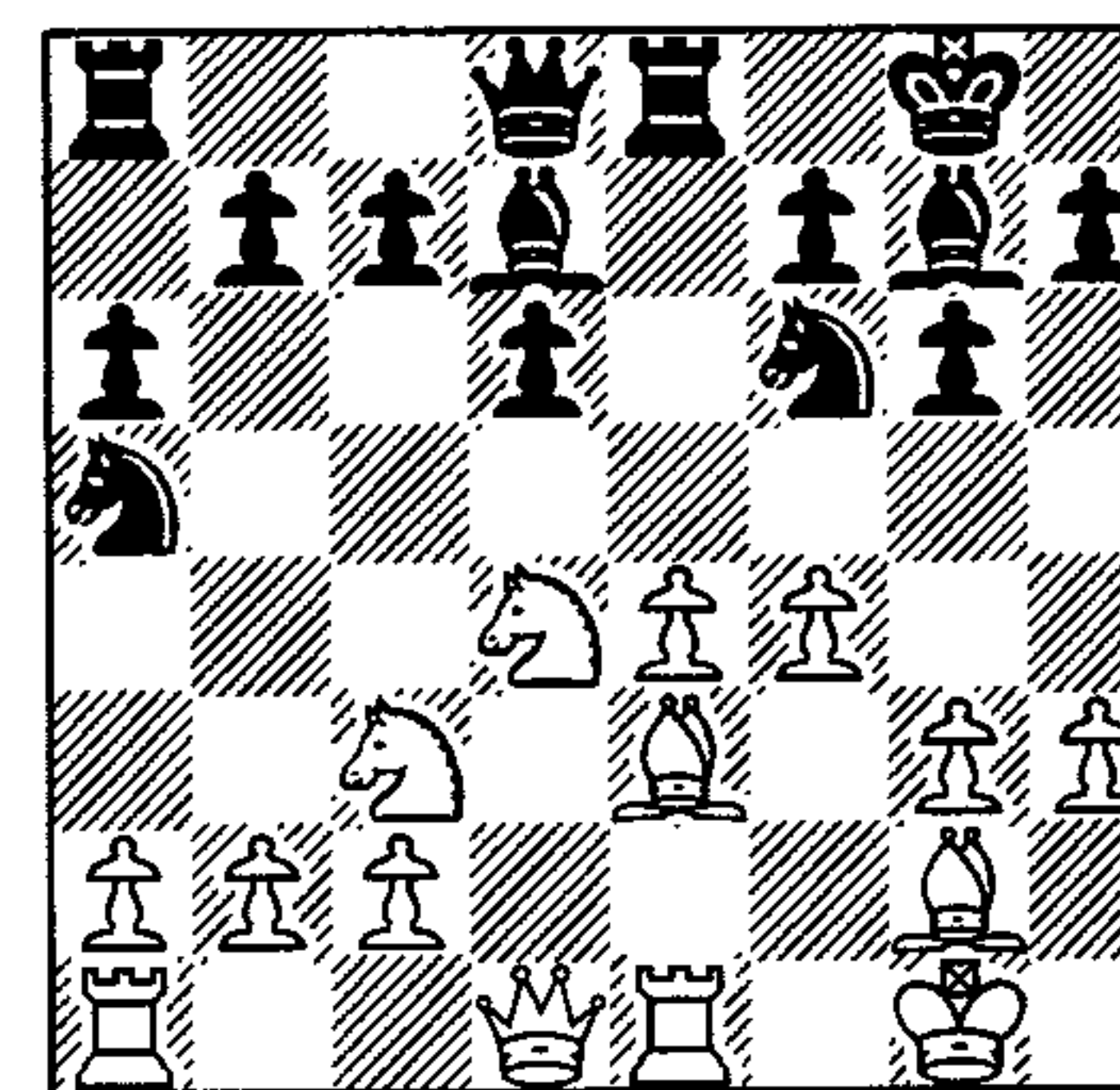


46 a6 ♖c6 47 ♖b2 ♗f4 48 a7 ♖a5 49 ♗c4 1-0

Exercise 26: White to move

Solozhenkin-Svidler

St. Petersburg



This position is quite tense. Black has numerous dynamic possibilities, with ...c7-c5 and ...♗c4 coming to mind. Assisting Black's cause is the plan of ...♗c6, putting pressure on e4, and ...b7-b5 with the intention of pushing further with ...b5-b4. The move Solozhenkin chose in the game dissolved all of the problems and gave him a small advantage. I believe he chose the right path, but as we shall see, it is not so apparent.

13 ♗f2!

13 b3?! c5 14 ♗de2 ♗c6 15 ♖d3 b5 and White is not really well coordinated. Additionally, 13 ♖d3 c5 14 ♗de2 (14 ♗f3 ♗c6 15 e5 dxe5 16 ♖xd8 ♖axd8 17 ♗xe5 ♗xg2 18 ♖xg2 ♗d5! is just equal) 14...b5! presents Black with several aggressive opportunities, knowing that 15 ♖xd6? ♗c4 16 ♖xc5 ♖c8 17 ♖a7 ♖c7 18 ♖d4 ♗xe4 19 ♖d3 ♗xb2 wins for Black.

Rather interesting is 13 g4! with the following idea: 13...♗c4 14 ♗c1, and now White wants to play b2-b3 and ♗b2. But there are some questions that need to be put to this plan. First, is the

bishop well placed on b2? This is not so clear. Secondly, does Black have a chance to use the fact that White is undeveloping? It appears that 14...c6! 15 b3 (15 ♖d3 b5 16 b3 b4! and Black has counterplay against e4, although the position cannot be described as anything other than unclear) 15...♖a5 16 ♖d3 ♗d5!, for example, is successful.

13...c5 14 ♗b3!

14 ♗f3 ♗c6 15 e5 dxe5 16 ♗xe5 ♗xg2 17 ♖xd8 (17 ♖xg2?! ♖c7! and Black has a better king's position) 17...♖axd8 18 ♖xg2 ♗d5! is equal according to Svidler.

14...♗c4 15 e5!

Necessary. Black has so much dynamic power and so much pressure against White's centre that the text, challenging for the dark squares, is absolutely essential. 15 ♖d3 b5! 16 e5 dxe5 17 ♗xa8 ♖xa8 is winning for Black. Rooks have nothing to do in such positions.

15...dxe5 16 fxe5

16 ♗xb7 exf4! and White has won nothing, or 16 ♗xc5 exf4 17 gxf4 and Black has many ways to get an equal, albeit attractive position (17...♖c7).

16...♗xe5

Also possible was 16...♖xe5! 17 ♖xe5 ♗xe5 18 ♗xc5 ♗c6 19 ♖xd8+ (19 ♗xb7 ♖xd1+ 20 ♖xd1 ♗xb7 21 ♗xb7 ♖b8 22 ♗xa6 ♖xb2 23 ♗d3 is slightly better for White according to Svidler, and perhaps he is right, but after 23...♗xd3 24 ♖xd3 ♖xc2 it is hard to see it as winning chances) 19...♖xd8 20 ♗xc6 ♗xc6 21 ♖d1 ♖xd1+ 22 ♗xd1 ♗b4 23 c3 ♗xa2 24 ♗xb7 with a draw likely.

17 ♗xc5

17 ♖xb7 ♖xh3! and Black is better.
17...♗c7

Here Svidler prefers 17...♙c6! 18 ♗xd8 ♖axd8 19 ♙xc6 ♖xc6 20 ♖xb7 ♖b8 21 ♖d6 ♖xe1+ 22 ♖xe1 ♖xb2 23 ♖e2 with equality.

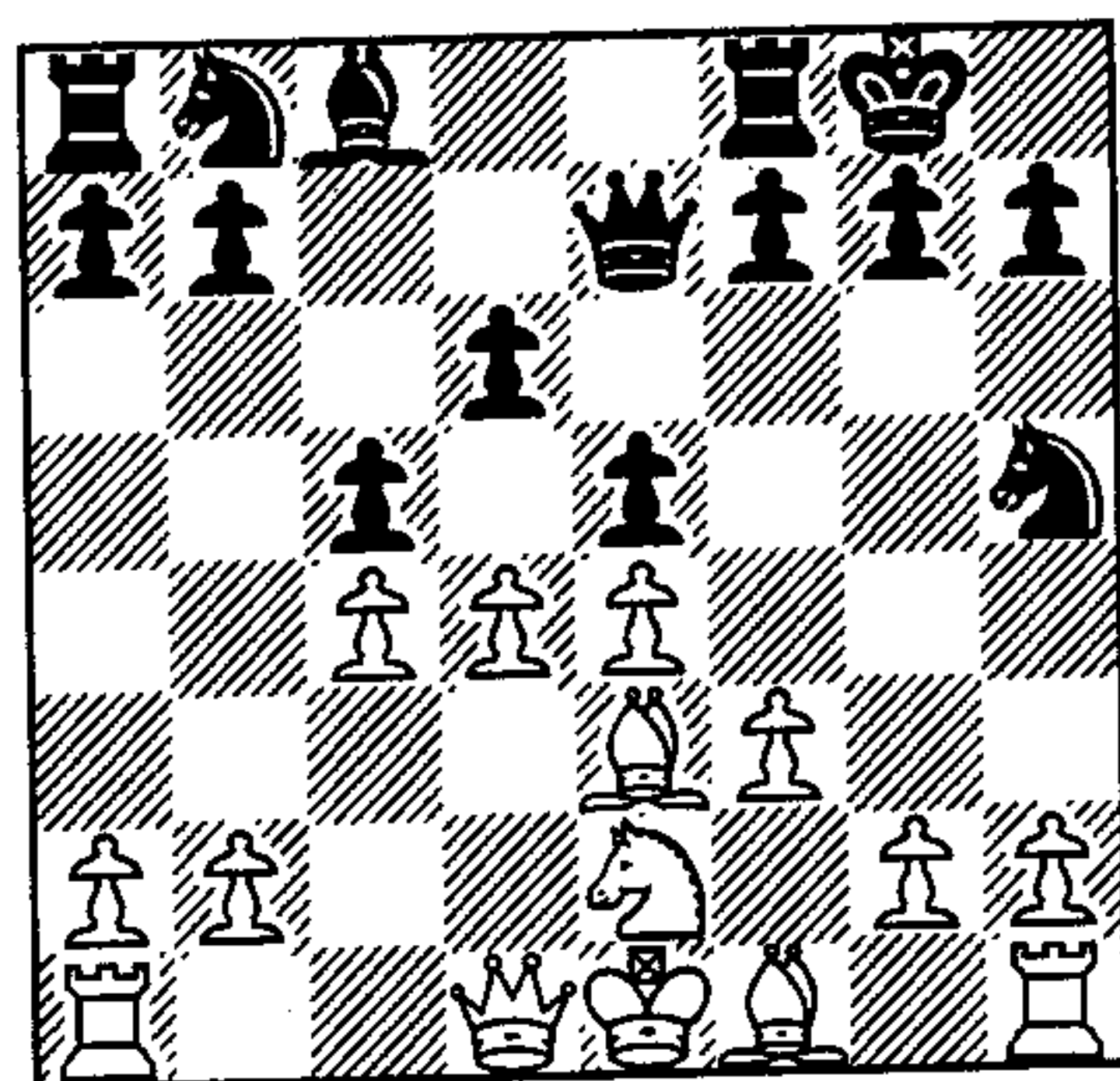
18 ♖xd7 ♖exd7 19 ♖xe8+! ♖xe8 20 ♗f3

White has emerged from the opening with a small edge. Now the greater playing strength decided the game.

20...♖c5 21 ♖e1! ♖xe1+?! 22 ♙xe1 b5?! 23 a3! h5! 24 ♙f2 ♖fd7 25 ♗a8+ ♖h7 26 ♖d5?! ♗e5 27 ♗c8 ♗xb2! 28 ♖e7 ♙d4 29 ♗g8+ ♖h6 30 ♗xf7 ♙xf2+ 31 ♗xf2? ♗xa3! 32 ♗f4+ ♖g7 33 ♗d4+ ♖f7! 34 ♖c8 ♗xg3! 35 ♖d6+ ♖e7 36 ♖c8+ ♖d8 37 ♖d6 ♖c7 38 ♖e8+ ♖b6 0-1

Exercise 27: White to move
Yakovich-Solozhenkin

St. Petersburg 1995



This exercise involves a simple decision. White will have to decide between d4-d5 and dxc5. And it is not a very difficult decision, in fact.

10 dxc5!

White is able to use his superiority on

the dark squares. After 10 d5? Black has no problems on the dark squares and can use his slight lead in development on the kingside to open up the position immediately with 10...f5!, when the tactical justification is 11 exf5 ♙xf5 12 g4 e4! and Black has the advantage.

10...dxc5

Now Black is planning ...♖b8-c6-d4, after which his position would be okay. White has to prevent this.

11 ♗d5!

Forcing Black's next.

11...♖a6 12 0-0-0

White has an edge thanks to the two bishops. Now ...f7-f5 also becomes irrelevant as exf5 would leave Black with a wounded pawn structure.

12...♗f6

As is often the case there is a cross-fire between tactics and the positional aspects of the position, and when one player has accumulated positional advantages even razor sharp tactics have a tendency to go his way. The following line is a good illustration of this – 12...♙e6 13 ♗d6 ♗f6 14 ♖c3 ♖fd8 15 ♖d5! ♗h4 16 ♗e7 ♗xe7 17 ♖xe7+ ♖f8 18 ♖d5 and White has a better ending.

13 ♖c3

The alternative 13 ♙xc5? ♙e6 14 ♗d6 ♖xc5 15 ♗xc5 ♖fc8 is obviously wrong.

13...♖f4 14 ♗d6 ♙e6?!

14...♗xd6 15 ♖xd6 ♖e6 16 ♖d5 ♖d4 17 f4 leads to only a modest plus for White.

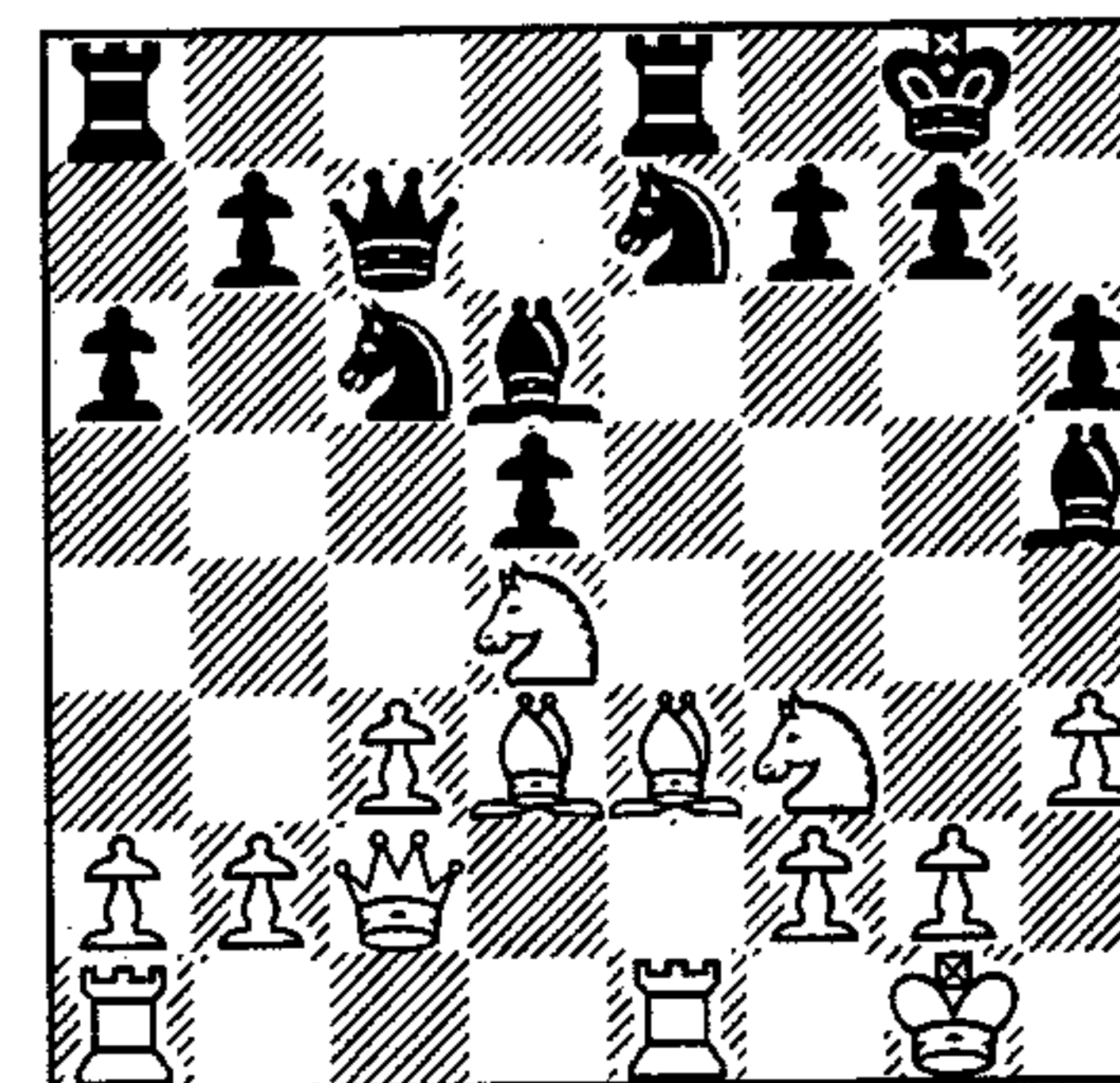
15 ♗d2!

Now White has a clear advantage as the knight has nowhere sensible to go from f4 (d4 is suddenly far away).

15...♖b4 16 ♙xc5 ♖fd8 17 ♗e3 ♖xd1+ 18 ♖xd1 ♖xa2+ 19 ♖b1 ♗d8 20 ♖f2 ♖c8 21 ♖xa2 ♗a5+ 22 ♙a3 b5 23 g3 b4 24 gxf4 exf4 25 ♗c1 bxa3 26 b3 ♖b8 27 ♙d3 h5 28 ♗c2 ♗c5 29 ♖d1 a5 30 ♖c3 ♗e3 31 ♗e2 ♗d4 32 ♖c1 ♖d8 33 ♖d5 ♖b8 34 ♖b1 1-0

Exercise 28: White to move
Svidler-Dreev

Novosibirsk 1995



The situation can easily be explained. White needs to both complete development (a1-rook) and to generally improve his pieces. But there are some problems as 16 ♖ad1 ♖xd4! followed by ...♙xf3 is not right. The problem here is, in fact, the knight on f3, which is not very well placed, so...

16 ♖h4!

The only alternative, 16 ♙e2, meets with 16...♙g6 when White is not completely happy.

16...♖e5 17 ♙e2!

Now White is able to bring the rook to e1, the best square!

17...♙xe2 18 ♖xe2 ♖7g6

18...♖c4?! 19 ♖ae1! helps only White. The exchange on e3 is not really an op-

tion as the bishop is clearly White's worst placed piece.

19 ♖xg6 ♖xg6 20 ♖f5

White has the advantage.

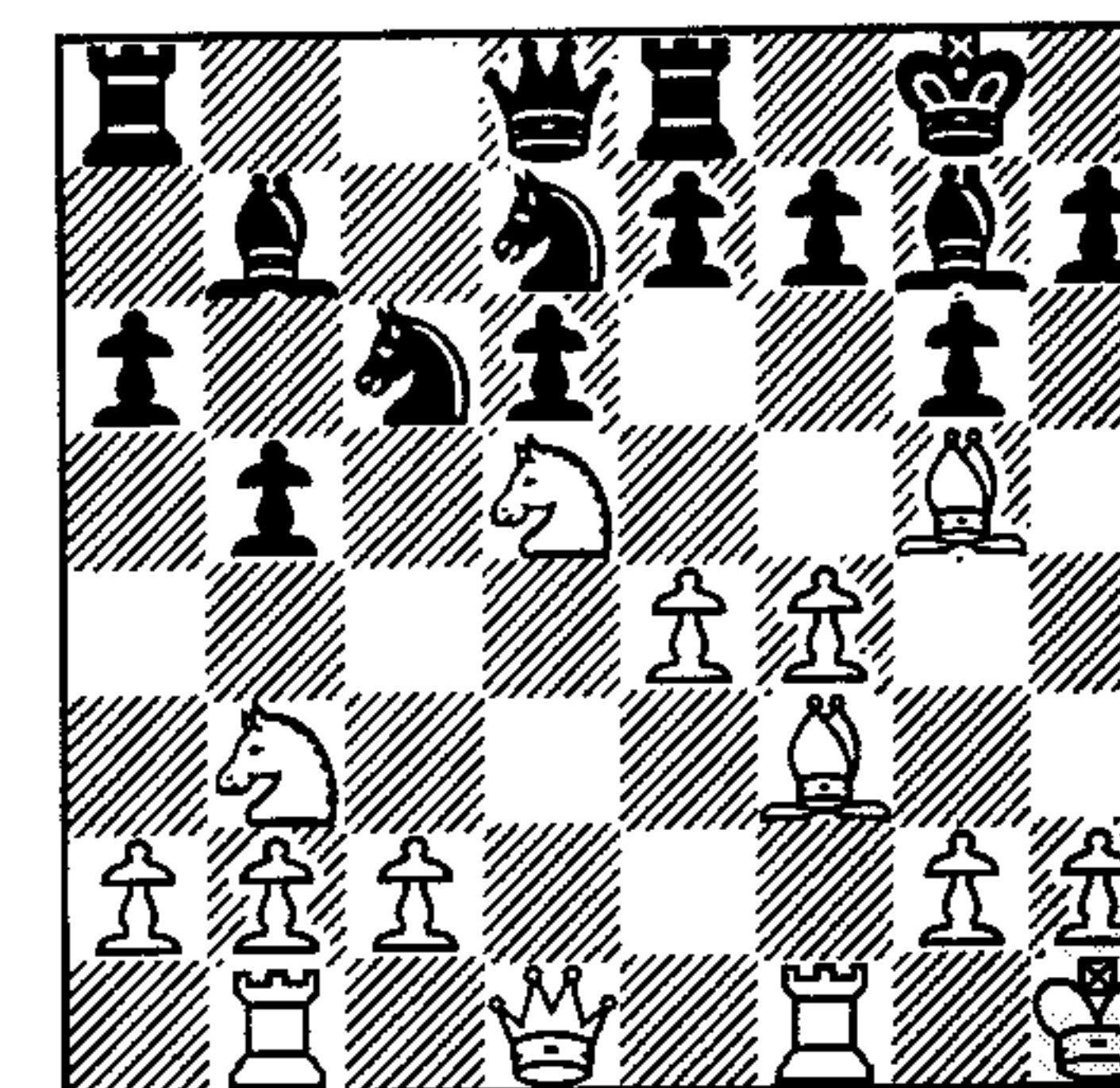
20...♙c5 21 ♖d2 ♖ad8 22 ♖ad1 ♖f4?!

The cause of Black's coming problems. 22...♖e5 23 ♙xc5 ♗xc5 24 ♖d4 is a shade favourable to White, whose knight will be well placed on e3, while Black has difficulty generating counterplay.

23 ♗a4 ♙xe3 24 fxe3 ♖e6 25 ♖xd5 h5?! 26 ♖d6 ♖f8 27 ♗b4 g6! 28 c4 b6 29 ♗c3 ♖c5 30 ♗f6 ♖e6 31 b3 b5 32 c5 b4 33 ♖e4 ♖xd5 34 ♖xd5 ♖c8 35 ♗f1! ♗c6 36 ♗a1 ♖d8 37 ♖xd8+ ♖xd8 38 ♗d4 ♖e6 39 ♗xb4 f5 40 ♖c3 ♗xc5 41 ♗xc5 ♖xc5 42 b4 ♖d3 43 ♖d5 ♖f7 44 a3 ♖b2 45 ♖f2 h4 46 ♖e2 g5 47 ♖b6 ♖e6 48 a4 ♖d6 49 ♖d2 1-0

Exercise 29: Black to move
Apicella-Svidler

Yerevan 1996



It is interesting that none of my pupils was able to solve this at the first attempt. Ivo Timmermans found the first two moves the second time around

but then failed on the main idea. Still, it fascinates me that pure logic will give you the first two moves of a three move forcing line! White has two active pieces in the shape of the advanced knight and bishop. Ivo decided that he had to evict both of them...

14...f6!

Kramnik's new idea. Previously 14...♖b8 15 c3 a5 16 a3 a4 17 ♖c1 e6 18 ♗e3 ♗f6 19 ♖d3 ♗e7 20 ♗f2 had been played in Xie-Tisdall, USA 1995, with an unclear game.

15 ♗h4 e6 16 ♗e3

Stage 1 has now been completed. The main reason why Black is not in trouble (note that f4-f5! is threatened) is the next move.

16...g5!

As the f3-bishop is pointing the other way and the other will be doing likewise on g3, Black has no reason to fear a kingside attack. Therefore he can accept this slight structural weakening in return for occupying the e5-square.

17 ♗g3?!

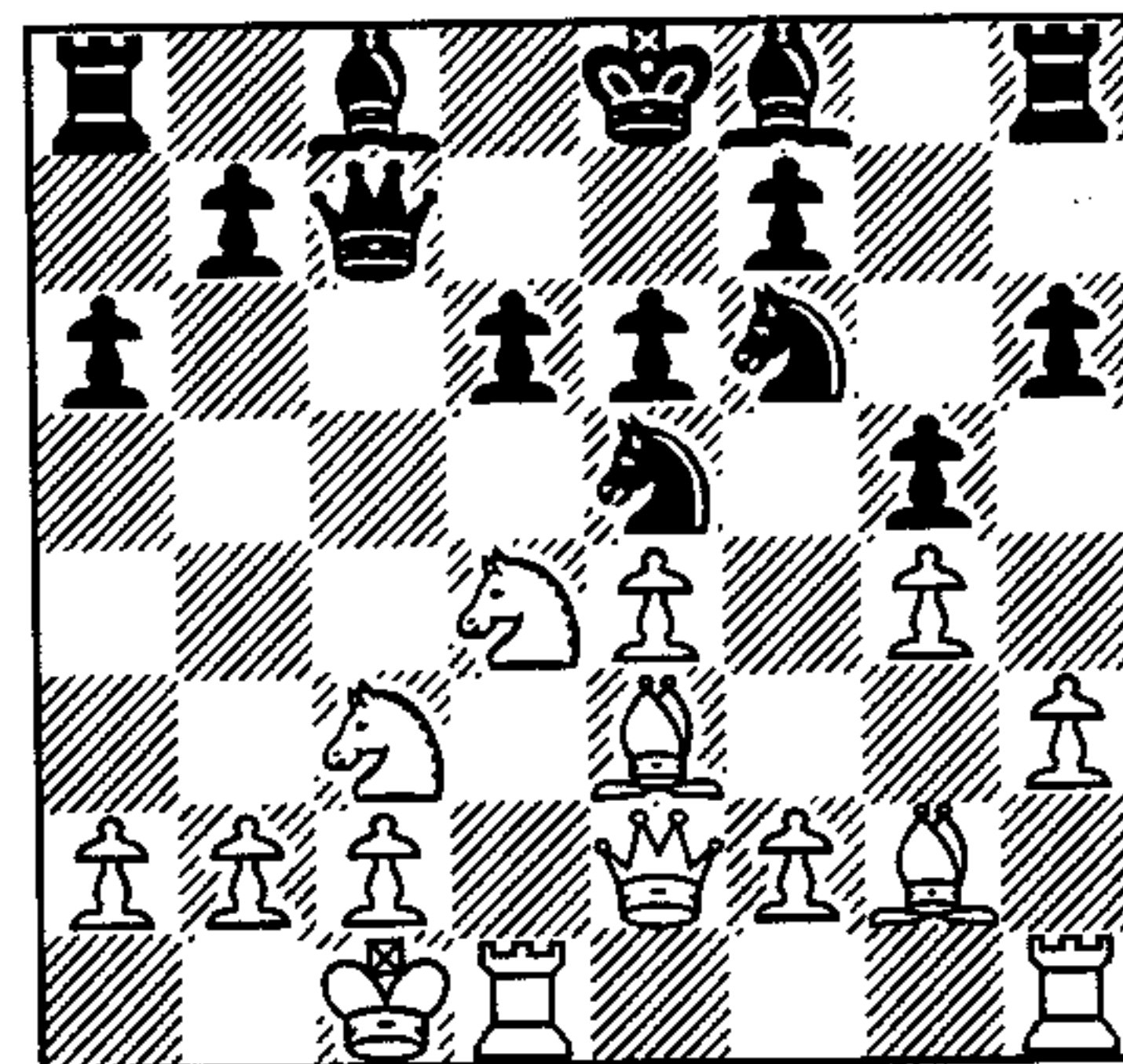
Svidler evaluates 17 fxc5 fxc5 18 ♗g3 ♗de5 19 ♗h5 ♖f8 20 ♖e2 ♖e7 21 c3 as unclear but I would say that Black looks fine.

17...gxf4 18 ♗xf4 ♗de5 19 ♗h5 ♖f8

Black is better.

20 c3 ♖e7 21 ♖e2 ♗g6 22 ♗g3 ♗ce5 23 ♗d2 ♖h8 24 ♖f2 ♖ad8 25 ♖bf1 ♗h6 26 ♗g4?! ♗xg4 27 ♗xg4 d5! 28 ♗h5 dxe4 29 ♗xe4 f5 30 ♗xg6 hxg6 31 ♗d6 ♗a8! 32 ♗e5+ ♖g8 33 ♖d1 ♖d7 34 ♖d3 ♖fd8 35 ♖g3 ♖g5 36 ♖xg5 ♗xg5 37 ♖d3 ♗e4 38 ♖h3 ♖xd6 39 ♖h8+ ♖f7 40 ♖h7+ ♖e8 41 ♖h8+ ♗d7 0-1

Exercise 30: White to move
Svidler-Leko
Tilburg 1997



Of the three possible candidate moves in the diagram position, old theory considered only the weakest of the three, 12 f4?!. There are two main concepts in the position. For Black it is to keep his strong knight on e5; he has made considerable positional concessions to do so. White, on the other hand, wants to attack the kingside pawns before Black can catch up in development. Therefore White wants to play h3-h4 and to deprive Black of natural development and the stronghold on e5.

12 ♗f3!

Also possible is 12 h4!?, but here Black has more resources as he does not have to make weird manoeuvres to keep e5. 12...♗fxg4! is the most logical – 13 hxg5 ♗xe3 14 ♖xe3 ♗c4 15 ♖g3 (15 ♖e2 ♗g7 seems to be just fine for Black) 15...♖g8 16 f4 hxg5 17 f5! sees White with numerous dangerous threats, but Black has his domination of the dark squares and a stronghold on e5 to try to level it out. I think White is better, but not much.

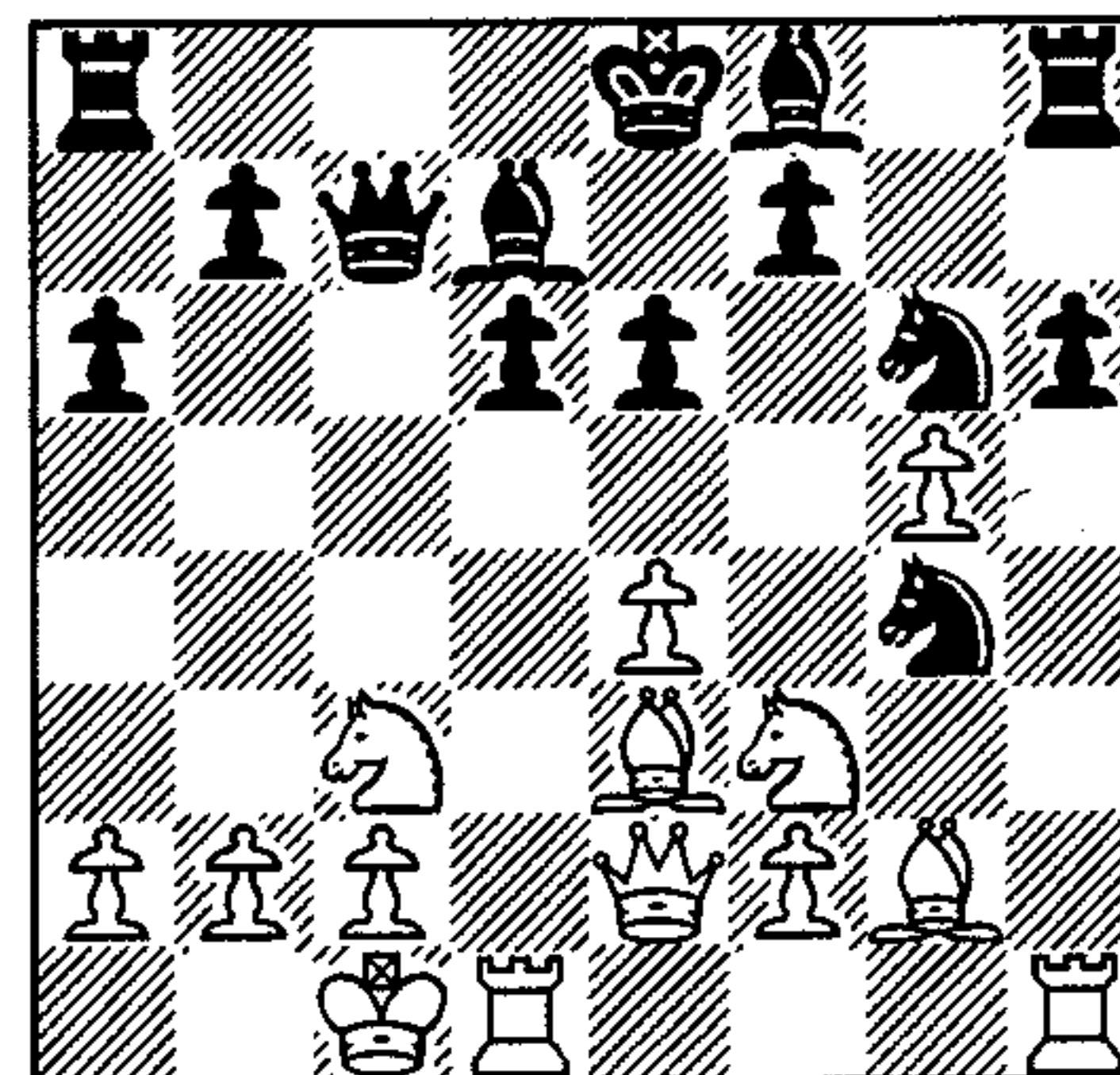
12...♗g6

Black has no useful moves. Rerouting the f6-knight takes a long time. 12...b5?! 13 ♗xe5 dxe5 14 h4 ♖g8 15 hxg5 hxg5 16 ♖f3 is very annoying for Black. Full development is still far, far away.

12...♗xf3 13 ♗xf3 ♗d7 14 h4 ♖g8 15 hxg5 hxg5 16 ♖d2! ♗e5 17 ♗e2 f6 18 f4 gxf4 19 ♗xf4 followed by g4-g5 gives White an overwhelming advantage. Black has been able to keep his knight on e5, but at the cost of everything else going wrong!

13 h4! ♗xg4 14 hxg5 ♗d7

14...♗xe3 looks more logical but the lead in development gives White an advantage after 15 ♖xe3 hxg5 (15...♖c5 16 ♖d2 hxg5 17 ♖xh8 ♗xh8 18 e5 d5 19 ♗e4! and Black is busted) 16 ♖xh8 ♗xh8 17 ♖xg5 and Black does not really have control over the dark squares in the centre.



15 ♗d2!

White does not want to exchange this bishop. The knight on g4 looks silly and there is still pressure on the kingside.

15...0-0-0

15...hxg5 16 ♖xh8 ♗xh8 17 ♗xg5 gives White an overwhelming advantage.

tage. Now f2-f4 is possible.

16 ♗d4 ♗g7!?

Black gives up a pawn for some activity, which would not be present after 16...h5 17 f3 ♗4e5 18 ♖b1 ♗c4 19 ♗c1 etc.

17 ♖xg4 ♗xd4 18 gxf6 ♗e5 19 ♖e2 ♗c4 20 ♖h3! ♗xd2 21 ♖xd2 ♗e5 22 f4 ♗f6 23 ♖xd6 ♖xd6 24 ♖xd6 ♖dg8 25 ♗f3?

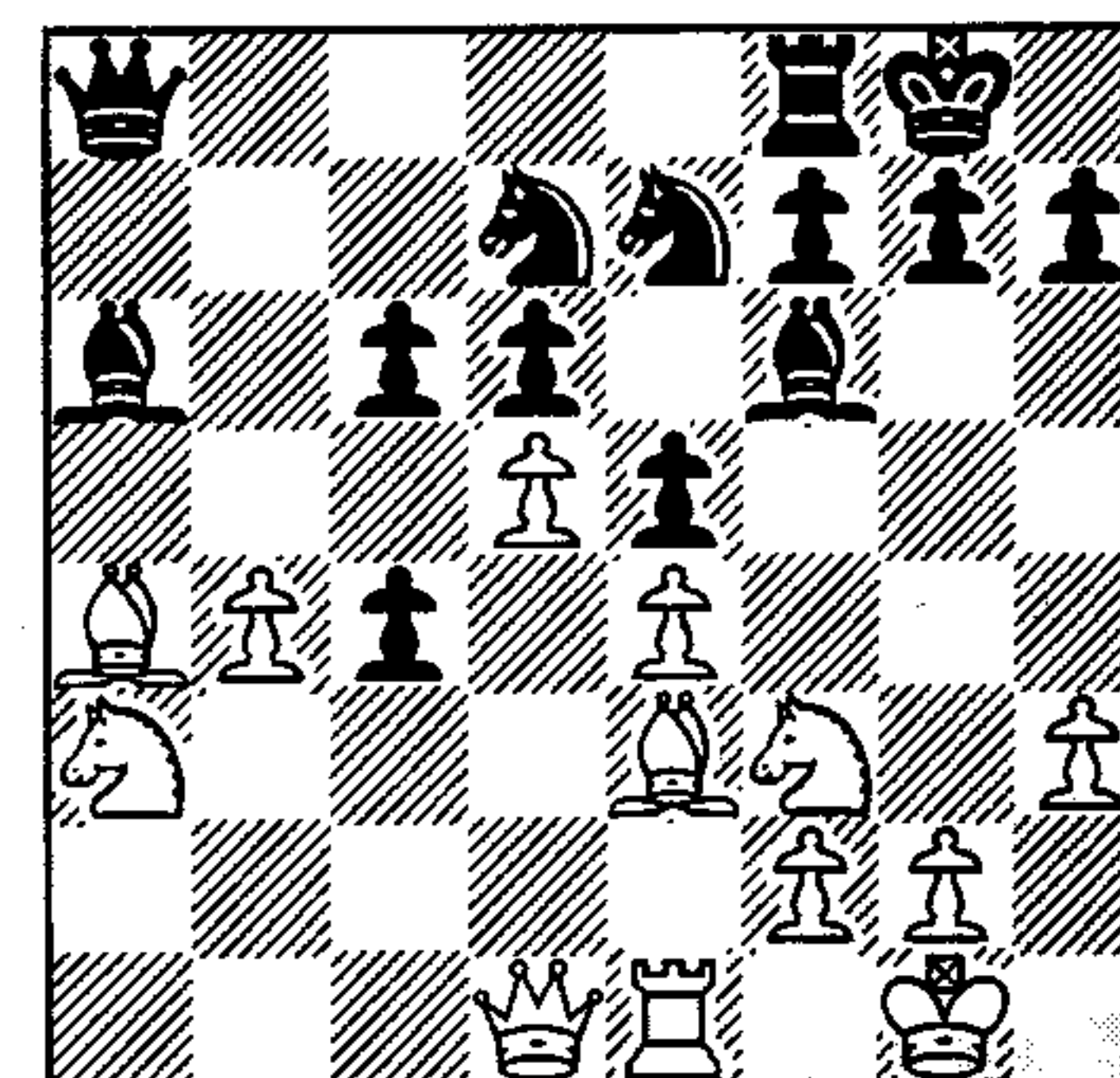
Whoops. After 25 e5 ♖xg2 26 exf6 ♖h7 27 ♗e4 ♖g6 28 ♖hd3 ♗c6 29 ♗g5 ♖hxh6 30 ♗xe6! ♖b8 31 ♗d4 ♖xf6 32 ♗xc6+ bxc6 33 ♖xf6 ♖xf6 34 ♖d4 White wins.

25...e5 26 f5 ♖g1+ 27 ♖d1 ♗g5+ 28 ♖b1 ♖xd1+ 29 ♗xd1 ♖xh6 30 ♖xh6 ♗xh6 31 ♗h5 f6 32 ♗f7

Unfortunately for White this endgame cannot be won.

32...♖d8! 33 ♗d5 ♖c7 34 ♗e2 b6 35 c3?! ♖d6 36 ♖c2? ♗xf5 37 ♗b7 ♗g6 38 ♗g3 ♗f4 39 ♗f5+ ♗xf5 ½-½

Exercise 31: Black to move
Svidler-Gabriel
Bad Homburg 1998



The centre is about to collapse yet it is unclear what the implications will be.

Black has good prospects for most of his pieces, with the d7-knight being clearly his most inactive piece (if we do not count the rook). White has problems with his knight on a3 and, perhaps, with the co-ordination. However, after Black's next White is able to bring his knight into play and thus gains an advantage.

20...♙b7?!

20...cxd5! is correct. The sacrifice is of the worst placed black piece and the gain is total control of the centre. Then 21 ♙xd7 dxe4 22 ♖h2 d5 23 ♘g4 is good for White, as is 21...♙c8 22 ♙xc8 ♜xc8 23 ♖b5 dxe4 24 ♖h2 d5 25 ♘g4 ♗a6 26 ♖xf6+ ♗xf6 27 ♙c5!, but perhaps Black can play 21...♙b7!? 22 ♖b5 ♜d8 23 ♙g4 d4 with counterplay. This leaves 21...d4! 22 ♖xd4!? (22 ♙c1 c3 23 b5 ♙b7 is hardly any better for White, the pawns are very strong and will never be lost) 22...exd4 23 ♙xd4 ♙xd4 24 ♗xd4 ♙c8! 25 ♙xc8 ♗xa3 26 ♙g4 ♗xb4 27 ♜c1 with a more or less level game.

21 ♖xc4 cxd5 22 ♖xd6

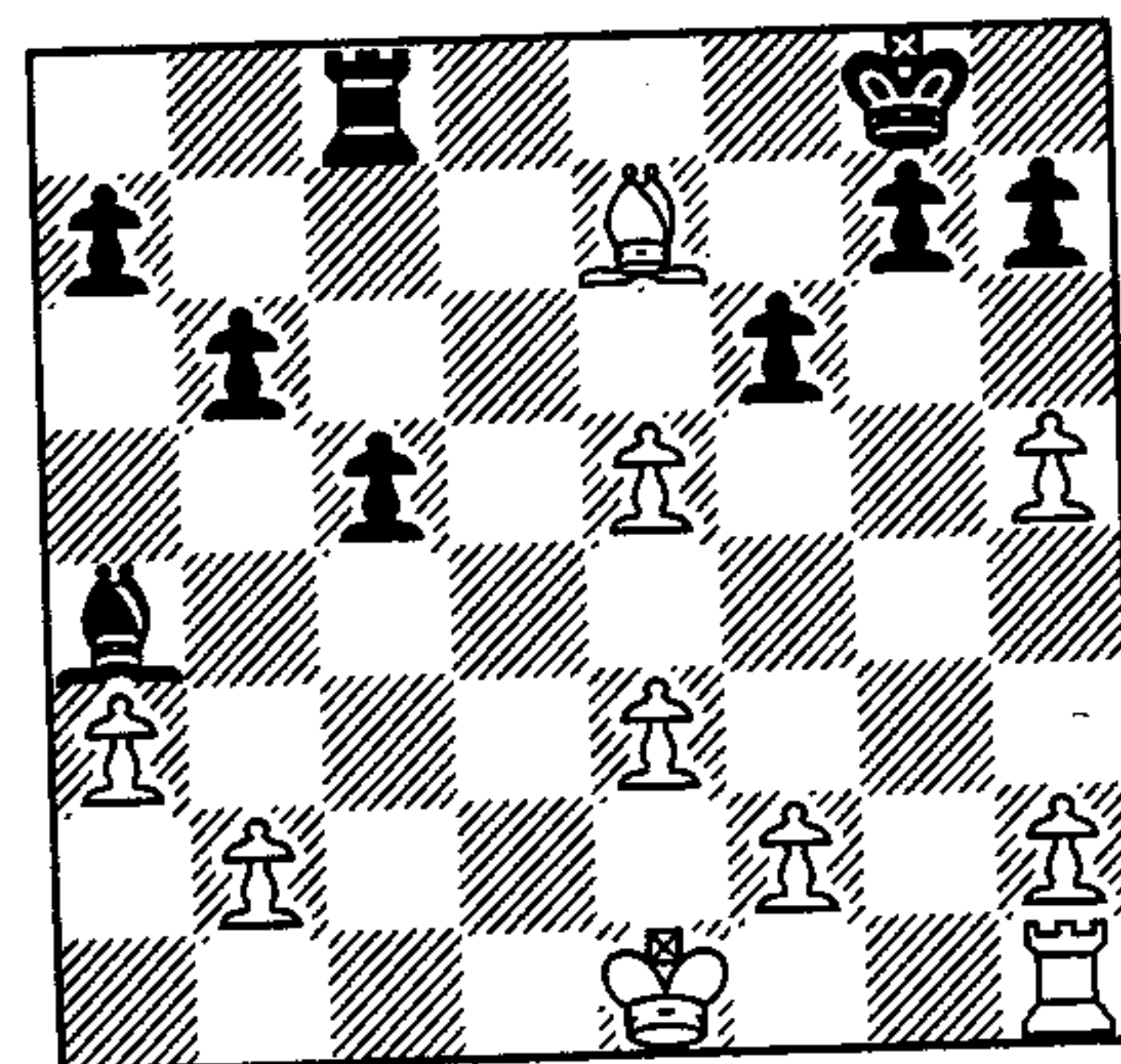
Now the knight is fabulous. White has an advantage.

22...dxe4 23 ♖h2!?

23 ♖xb7 ♗xb7 24 ♗xd7 ♗xd7 25 ♙xd7 exf3 26 gxf3 was also pretty good for White. But Svidler must think that his pieces are better co-ordinated and goes for the dynamic exploitation of his advantage.

23...♙c6 24 b5 ♙d5 25 b6 ♜d8 26 ♙xd7 ♜xd7 27 ♖xe4 ♖h8?! 28 ♖xf6 gxf6 29 ♗h5! ♖g6 30 ♖g4 ♜d6 31 ♜d1! f5 32 ♙c5 ♖f4 33 ♗xf5 ♙b3 34 ♗xe5+ f6 35 ♗xf4 1-0

Exercise 32: White to move
Khalifman-Hübner
Munich 1992



This is a very complex endgame where, initially, I believed there was only one logical way to maintain the initiative. But as it turns out there are two. I would probably still go for the first at the board, as it is a risk free option.

23 ♜g1!

Introducing the rook into the proceedings. The important point here is that if Black takes on e5 the bishop should recapture to maintain pressure on g7. Thus the text is quite logical in that it activates the rook and exerts pressure on Black's main weakness. But the creative 23 exf6 is also interesting. Then 23...♙f7 is the reason why most people reject this immediate capture, but after 24 fxg7!? ♙xe7 25 h6 the situation is far from clear. Here are two possible continuations: 25...♙b3 26 ♜g1 ♙g8 27 ♜g4 ♜c6 28 ♜f4 ♜xh6 29 ♜f8 ♙f7 30 g8 ♗ ♙xg8 31 ♜xg8 ♜xh2 32 ♜g7+ ♙d6 33 ♜xa7 and White has all the chances, although a draw is likely, or 25...♙f7 26 ♜g1 ♙g8 27 ♜g4 ♙b3 28 ♜f4 ♙f7 29 ♜f6! and White seems to be

much better.

23...♙f7

23...fxe5 24 ♙f6 ♜c7 25 ♙xe5 ♜d7 26 ♙e2 gives White permanent pressure.

24 ♙d6 ♜e8 25 f4 ♙c2 26 ♙d2 ♙e4 27 ♙c3! f5

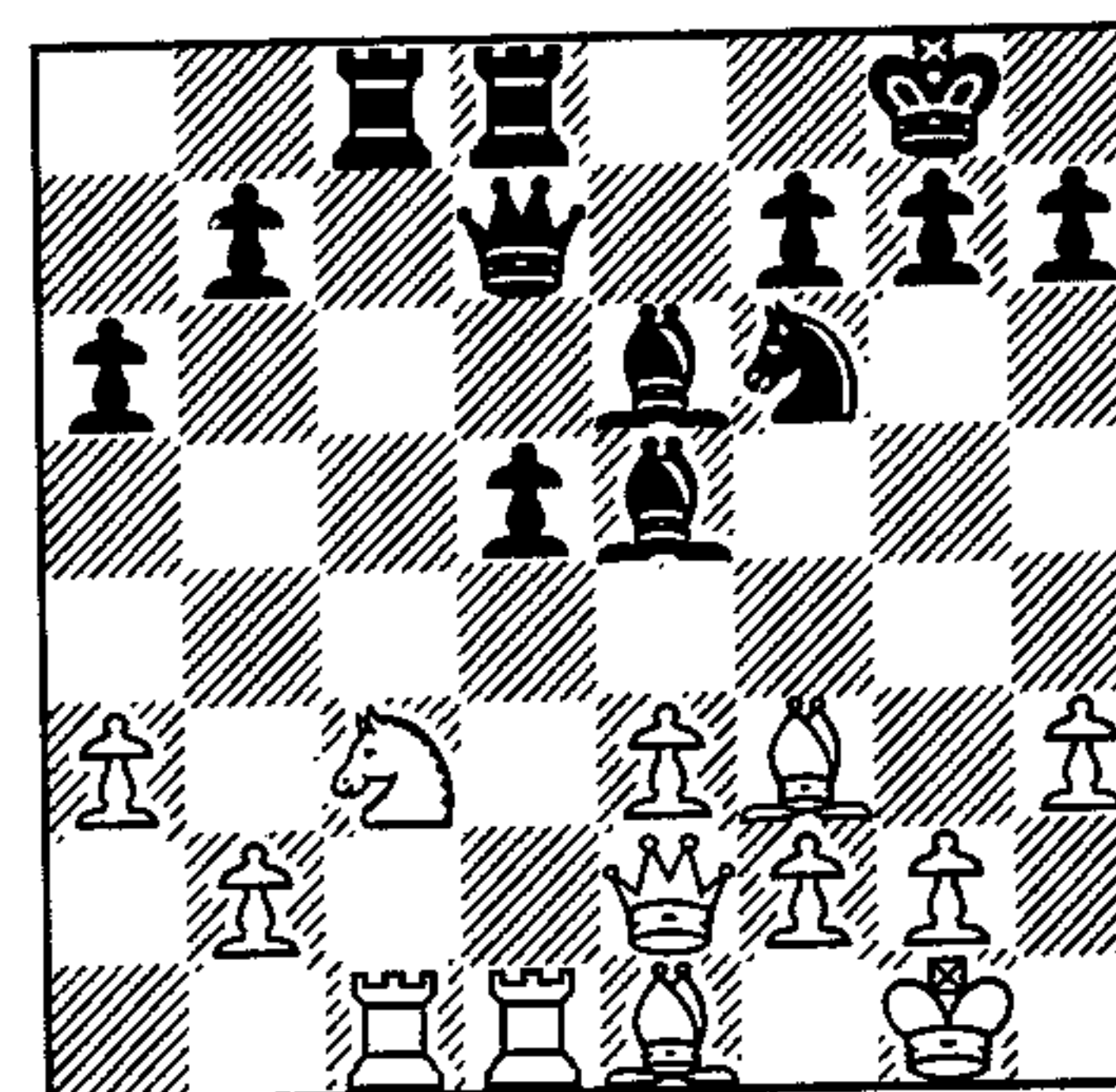
27...fxe5 28 ♙xe5 g6 29 hxg6+ hxg6 30 ♜d1 and White has control of the open files.

28 ♙c4 a6 29 h6! gxh6?

This is the decisive mistake. After 29...g6 30 h4 Black is under increasing pressure but can at least offer some resistance.

30 ♙c7 ♜e6 31 ♙d8! b5+ 32 ♙xc5 ♜c6+ 33 ♙b4 ♜c2 34 b3 ♜xh2 35 ♙f6 ♙d5 36 ♜g7+ ♙f8 37 ♜d7 ♙e6 38 ♜d6 ♙f7 39 ♜xa6 ♙b2 40 ♜a7+ ♙g6 41 ♙c5 ♜xb3 42 ♜g7+ ♙h5 43 ♙d6 ♙c4 44 e6 ♜xa3 45 e7 ♜a8 46 ♙c3 b4 47 ♙xb4 ♙h4 48 e4 fxe4 1-0

Exercise 33: Black to move
Gurevich-Khalifman
Biel 1993



This is an easy one. Black should relocate the bishop on e5 as it is the only piece not doing anything sensible.

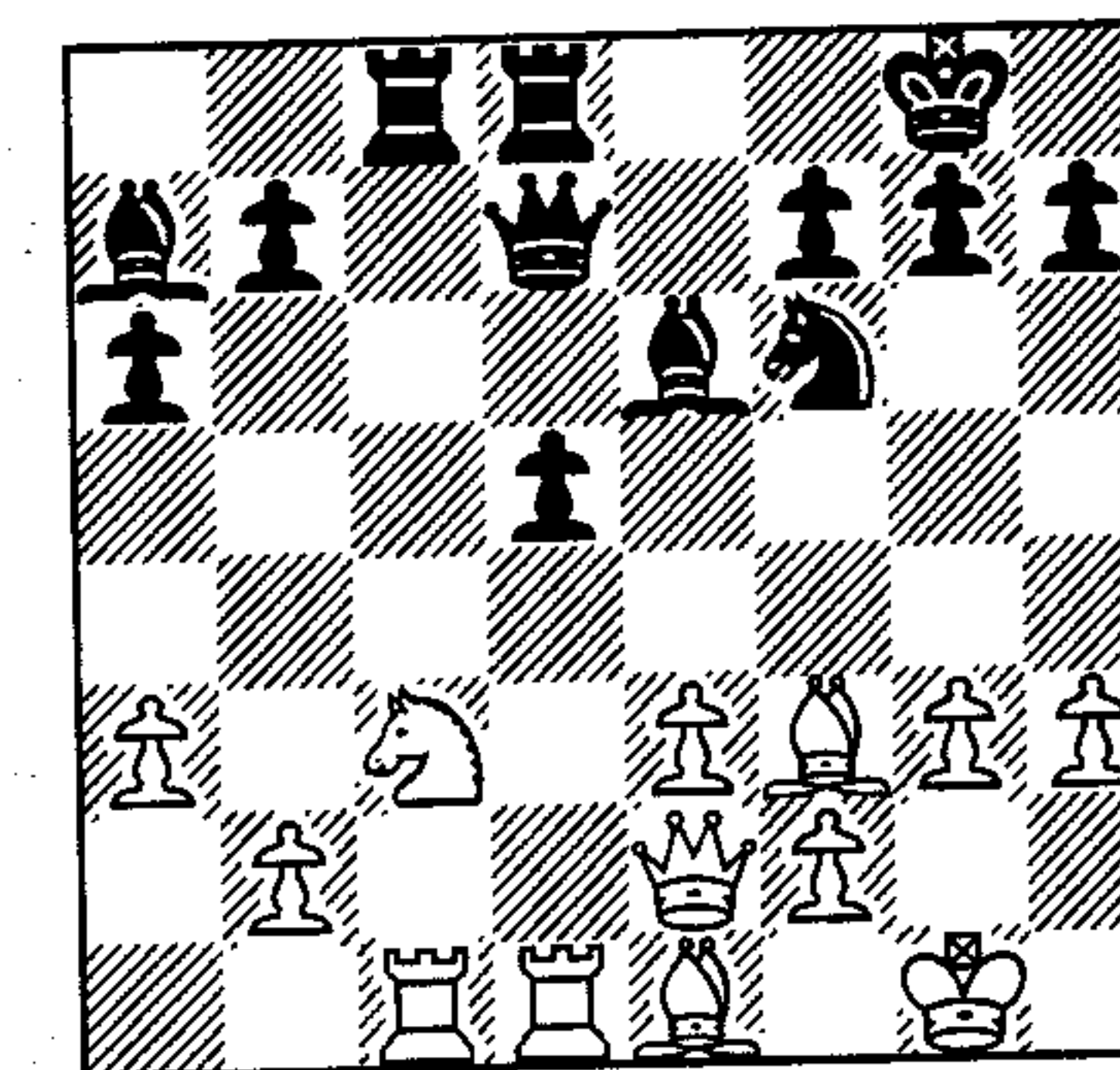
20...♙b8!

With the idea of ...♗d6. Hence White's next.

21 g3!

The pressure on d5 protects the h3-pawn for the time being.

21...♙a7!



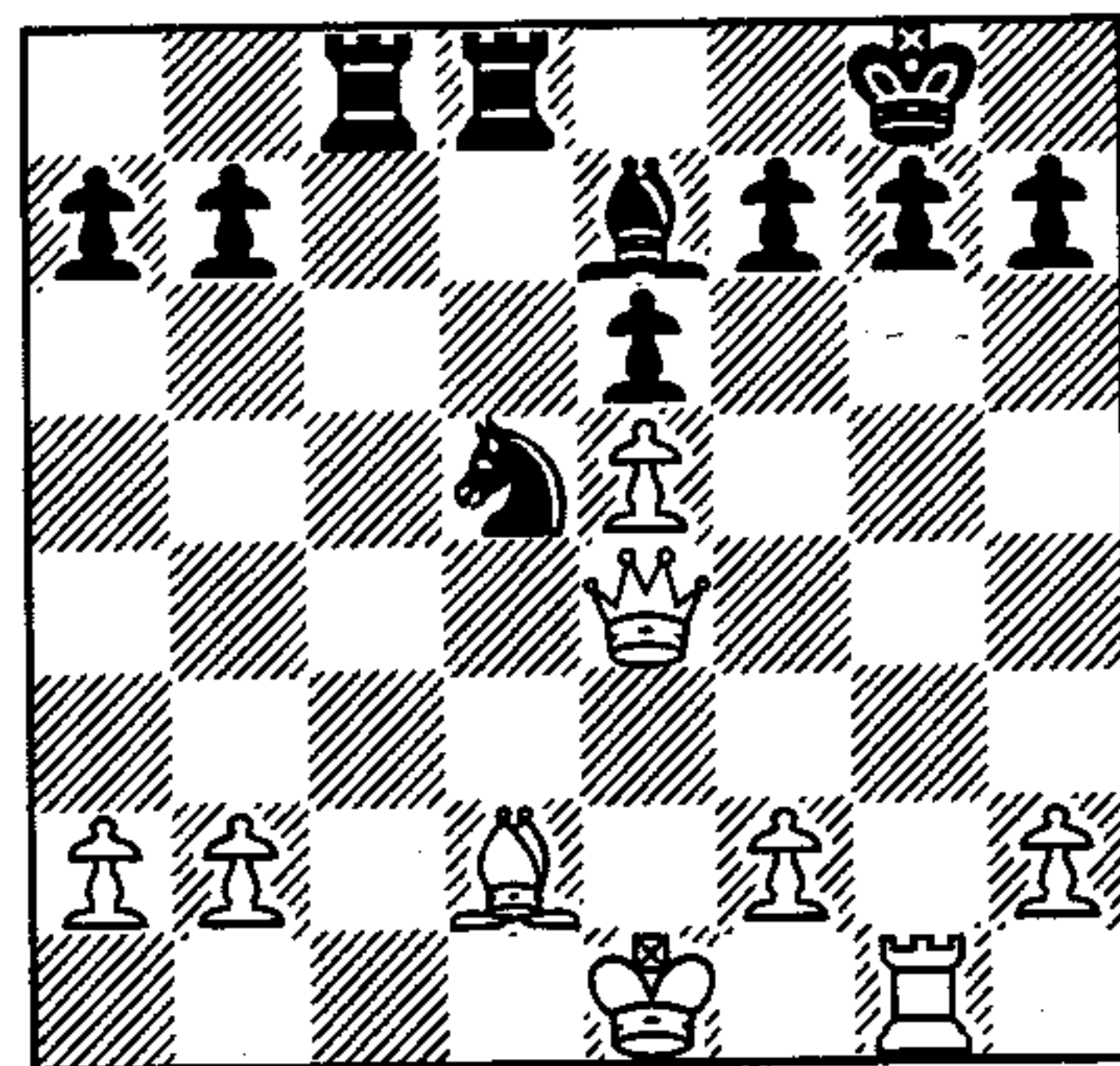
This move should have been anticipated in order to have dealt successfully with this exercise. After g2-g3 the bishop is no longer of any use on the b8-h2 diagonal; the squares d4, e3 and f3 are more important now.

22 g4?

Creating a serious weakness. Better was 22 h4, although Black remains better.

22...h6! 23 ♙g2 d4! 24 exd4 ♙b3 25 ♜d2 ♙b8! 26 ♗f3 ♙d5! 27 ♖xd5 ♜xc1 28 ♖xf6+ gxf6 29 ♜d1 ♜xd1 30 ♗xd1 ♙e5 31 d5 ♙xb2 32 ♙d2 ♙xa3 33 ♙xh6 ♗e7 34 ♙f3 ♙d6 35 ♙e3 ♗e5 36 ♙f1 b5 37 ♗c2 b4 38 ♗a4 ♜b8 39 ♙d1 ♗xd5 40 ♙b3 ♗b5+ 41 ♗xb5 ♜xb5 42 ♙e2 ♜e5 43 ♙d3 ♙c5 44 ♙d2 ♙xf2 45 ♙xb4 ♜e3+ 46 ♙c2 ♜xh3 47 ♙c4 ♜g3 48 ♙xa6 ♜xg4 49 ♙d2 ♜d4 50 ♙d3 ♙g7 51 ♙c3 ♜d6 52 ♙d2 ♙h4 53 ♙b4 ♜d5 0-1

Exercise 34: Black to move
Nikolic-Khalifman
 Ter Apel 1994



Black has the more harmonious position. He has an extra pawn for the queen in addition to the rook and monster knight, and only one weakness – g7. White, on the other hand, has several weaknesses: e5, f2 and h2, along with a dodgy king position. The correct course is therefore for Black to slowly improve his position. It can be done best by driving the white queen away from the attractive post on e4, and by doubling rooks on the c-file. But Khalifman had another idea that, unfortunately for him, is logically flawed.

20...♙b4?!

This is based on a direct attack against the king. The only problem is that White, by sacrificing the rook, ruins the enemy king position and trades off his not so effective pieces. 20...b5!, with the idea of ...♖c4 and ...♗dc8, is the most logical way to improve the pieces. Black would probably be a little bit better.

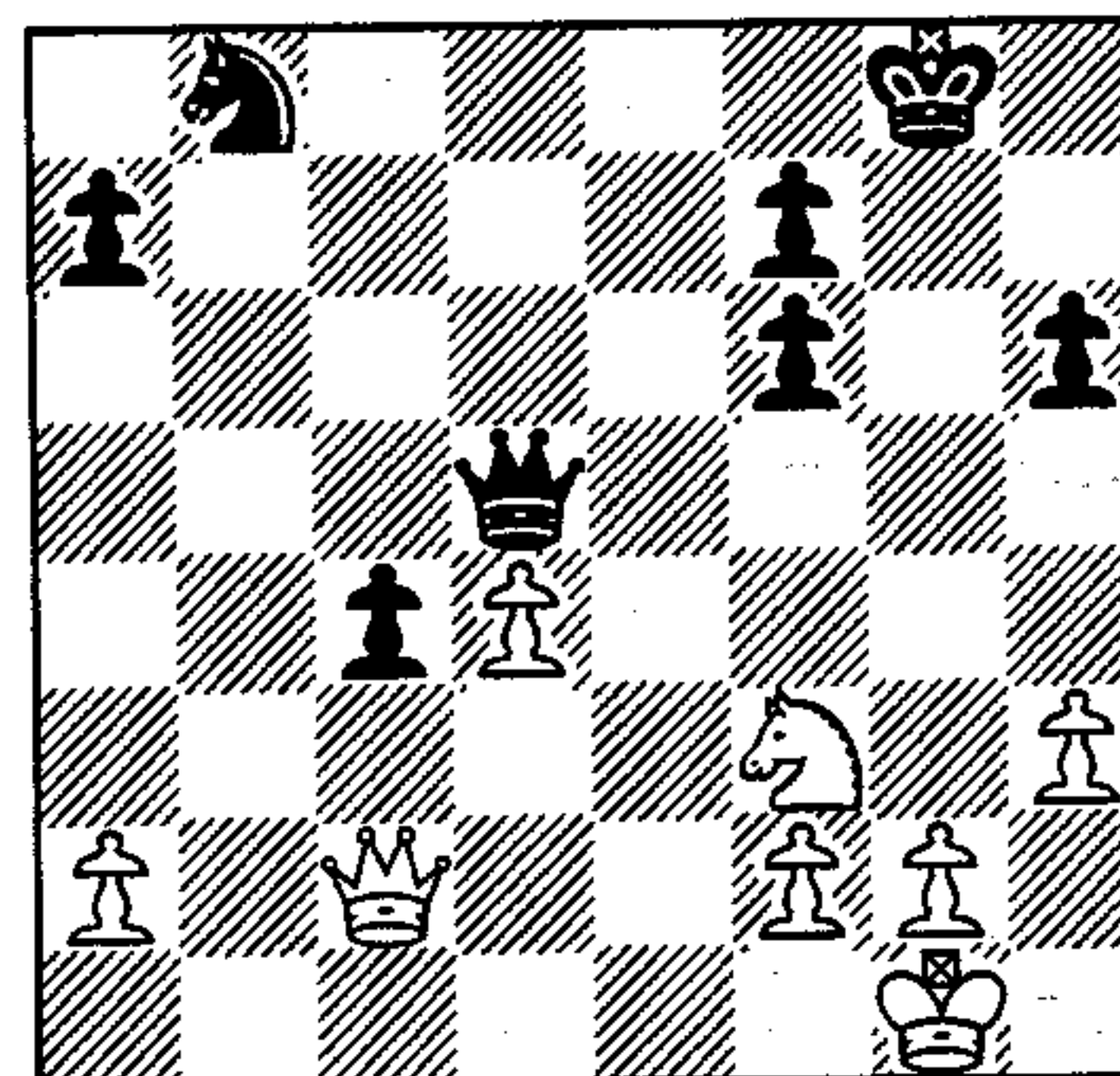
21 ♖xg7+! ♗xg7 22 ♙xb4 ♖xb4

22...♖c1+ 23 ♗e2 ♖g1 looks active, but the problem is that after 24 ♙d2!

White still has attacking possibilities on the dark squares around Black's king, and the position is therefore by no means clear.

23 ♗g4+ ♗h8 24 ♗xb4 ♖d7 25 h4! h6 ½-½

Exercise 35: White to move
Khalifman-Chandler
 Germany 1995



Here Black has a wonderful situation in the centre – a passed pawn, a well placed queen and pressure against the blockaded passed pawn. On the king-side he has serious problems, not only with his king safety, which is actually minor, but also with the h-pawn. These disadvantages will never fully disappear, but the advantages in the centre will.

27 ♖d2! ♗xd4 28 ♖xc4 ♖c6 29 ♖e3

White has a modest edge. This is always an annoying situation to have to defend, and in the game Black did not succeed.

29...♗a1+ 30 ♗h2 ♗e5+ 31 g3 ♖d4 32 ♗c8+ ♗g7 33 ♗d7 ♖f3+ 34 ♗g2 ♖g5 35 ♗g4 h5 36 ♗f5 ♖e6 37 h4 ♖d4 38 ♗d3 ♗g8 39 ♗f1 ♗f8 40 ♗g2 ♗g8 41 ♗f1 f5?!

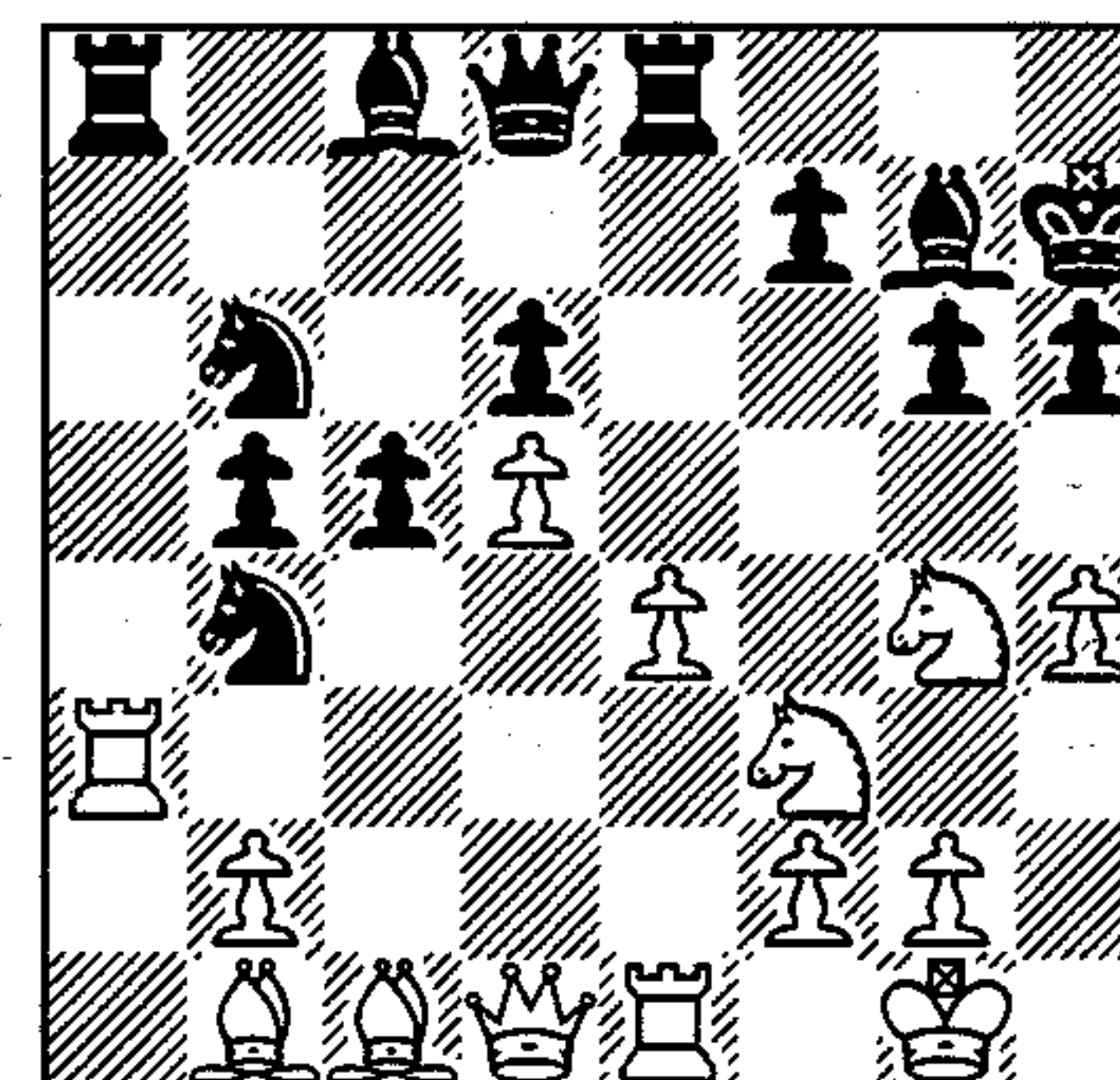
It transpires that this exchange and, later, the exchange of queens, is no help for Black, as White now can bring his king into play without thinking about the random factors queens produce.

42 ♗c4 f4?! 43 ♗d5! ♗xd5 44 ♖xd5 fxc3 45 fxc3! ♗g7 46 ♗f2 ♗g6 47 ♗e3 ♖f5+ 48 ♗f4 f6 49 ♗f3! ♗g7 50 ♖f4 ♗h6 51 ♖e2 ♖d6 52 ♗e3 ♗g6 53 ♖f4+ ♗h6 54 ♗d3!

Two weaknesses. Now a7 is officially a target.

54...♖f5 55 ♖e2 ♗g6 56 ♗e4 ♖e7 57 ♖f4+ ♗h6 58 a3 ♖c8 59 ♗d5 ♖b6+ 60 ♗c6 ♖c4 61 a4 ♖d2 62 a5 ♖e4 63 ♗b7 ♖xc3 64 ♗xa7 ♖f5 65 a6 1-0

Exercise 36: White to move
Khalifman-Gavrilov
 St. Petersburg 1994



This position is hard to solve, although I feel it should have been very easy. The white knight is very well placed on g4, all the other pieces help with the attack and h4-h5 is annoying for Black. The only problem is that the offensive seems to end before it has begun. The right idea is to keep the

knight on g4.

23 ♖fh2!

Also the least active piece in the attack. The g5-square is for the bishop. Note that the text clears the third rank for the rook.

23...♙xg4

Alternative lines look like this: 23...♗xh4? 24 ♖h3; 23...h5 24 ♙g5 f6 25 ♖xf6+ ♙xf6 26 e5 and White wins, as is the case after 23...f5 24 exf5 ♖xe1+ 25 ♗xe1 ♙xf5 26 ♙xh6 ♙xh6 27 ♖xh6 ♗xh6 28 ♙xf5 gxf5? 29 ♗e6+ ♗h7 30 ♗xf5+ etc.

24 ♖xg4 ♗e7 25 ♖xa8!

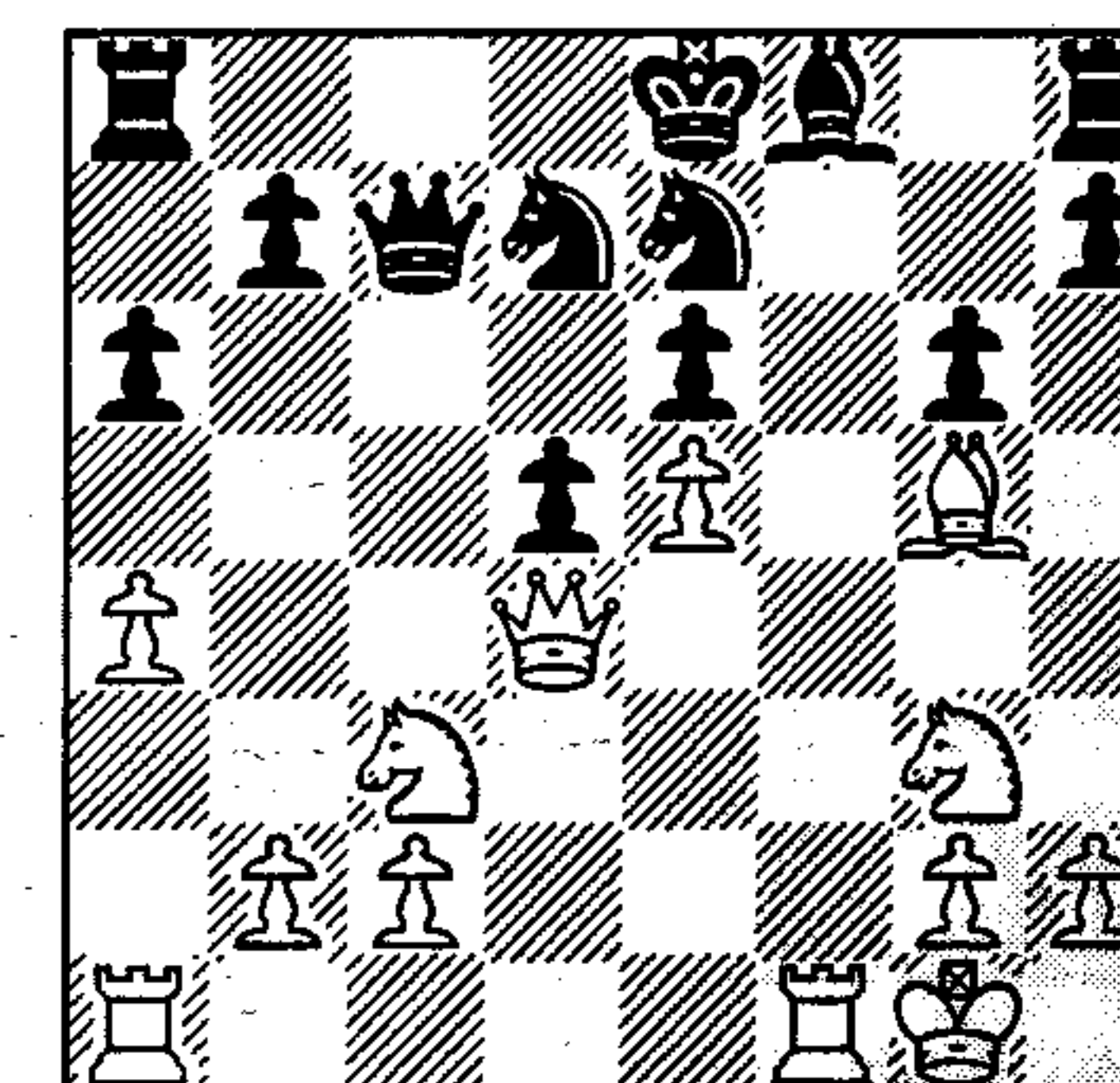
25 h5? ♖xa3 26 bxa3 ♖4xd5 gives Black counterplay through the c3-square.

25...♖xa8 26 h5 ♖c4 27 e5!

White has a considerable advantage and went on to win.

27...dxe5 28 b3 ♖b6 29 hxg6+ fxg6 30 ♖xe5! ♙xe5 31 ♗h5 ♗g7 32 ♖xe5 ♖4xd5 33 ♖e6! ♖g8 34 ♖xg6 1-0

Exercise 37: Black to move
Van der Werf-Khalifman
 Wijk aan Zee 1995



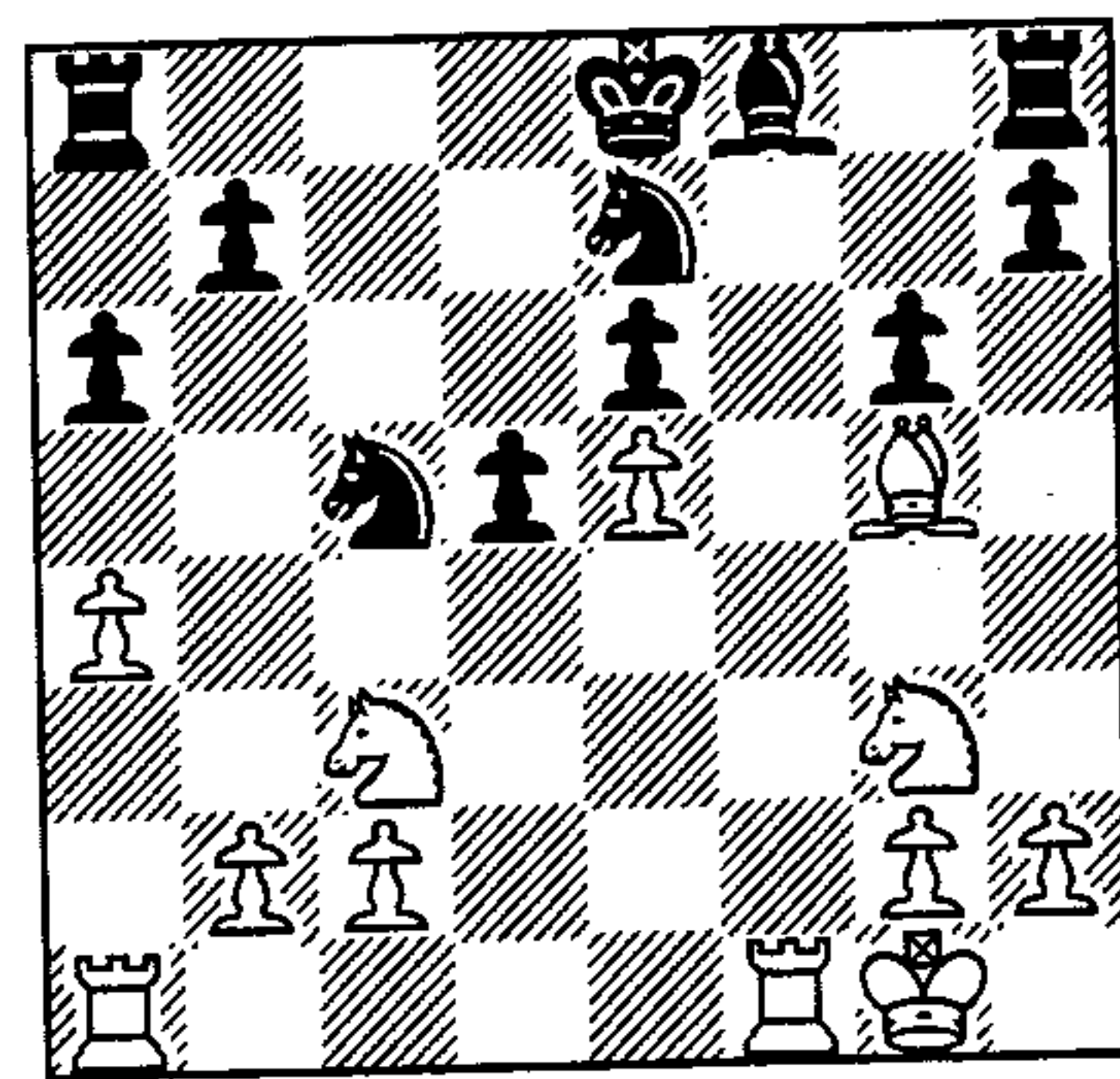
This is also a very difficult position,

apparently, but let me try to make it simple. Black has lasting advantages in the form of a superior pawn structure. Quite simply, the e5-pawn is weak. White, on the other hand, has a lead in development and some attacking chances against the king, which is still stuck in the centre. In many lines a piece sacrifice on d5 opens the position and brings the knight on g3 into close contact with the enemy king via e4. So what are we to do? Well, the threat of getting mated should prompt us to trade queens.

16... ♖c5!

There are no acceptable alternatives. 16... ♖c6 17 ♗xd5! exd5 18 ♖xd5 seems too dangerous, while 16... ♗f5 17 ♗xf5 gxf5 also fails to solve Black's defensive problems (18 ♖h4! then looks like the strongest). After 16... ♖xe5 17 ♖xe5 ♗xe5 18 ♗f6 White wins the exchange and 16... ♗xe5 17 ♖ae1! brings the inactive piece into play – 17... ♗c6 18 ♖h4 with problems for Black (18 ♗xd5?! exd5 19 ♖xd5 ♗e7! defends).

17 ♖xc5 ♗xc5



18 ♖f6?

This is the test but, as it is not dan-

gerous, it merely shows that White is drifting. 18 ♗f6 ♖g8 19 ♗ge2 ♗c6 is also preferable for Black, but had to be played.

18... ♗c6!

The only idea for White is to play b2-b4 and win the e6-pawn, but this is rather easily prevented with the most natural Black moves.

19 ♗e3?!

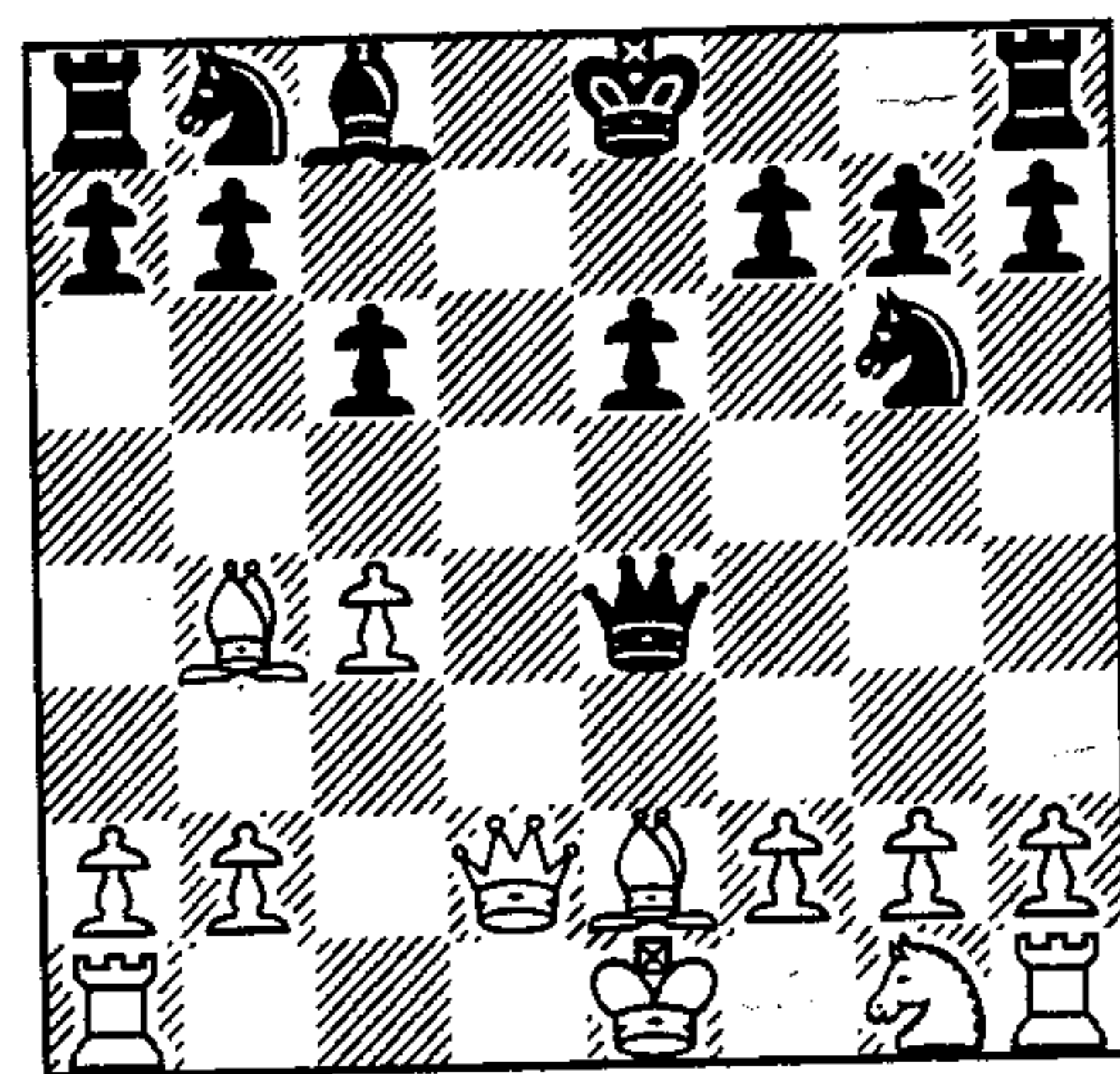
This does not work. Now Black might play 19... d4!?, when the loose b4 is the only move. But the game is also clear enough. After 19 ♖b1 ♗b4! the fight for that idea is over.

19... ♗e7 20 ♗xc5 ♗xc5+ 21 ♖h1 ♗e7 22 ♖af1 ♖hf8 23 ♖xf8 ♖xf8 24 ♖xf8 ♗xf8 25 ♗ce2 ♗xe5 26 ♗f4 ♗e7 27 ♗ge2 ♗c4 28 b3 ♗e3 29 c3 ♗f6 30 h4 e5 31 ♗d3 ♗d6 32 ♗g1 e4 33 ♗df4 ♗xf4 34 ♗xf4 ♗e5 35 g3 ♗f5 36 ♗e2 d4 0-1

Exercise 38: White to move

Khalifman-Filippov

Kazan 1995



White needs to develop fully before starting an assault on the black king. His two remaining moves are castling queenside and the development of the

knight. This should, of course, be done with the consideration of Black's only idea – to put something on f4. Hence White's next.

10 ♗h3!

Planning 0-0-0 with advantage. After the immediate 10 0-0-0 ♖f4!, as in Beckhuis-Haba, Pardubice 1994, Black will have to face a lot less pressure. Interesting, but not the strongest, is 10 ♗f3 ♗f4 11 0-0!? ♗xe2+ 12 ♖h1 with compensation according to Serper. Actually White does have some initiative for the piece here.

10... f6!?

I will ignore the theoretical discussion here, as the exercise is related to finding the right plan and nothing more. All I will say now is that the only game where Black had a good result was the following: 10... c5 11 ♗xc5 ♖xg2 12 0-0-0 ♗d7 13 ♗g5 ♖c6 14 ♗a3 f6 15 ♗h5 fxg5 16 ♖xg5 ♗f7 17 ♖e7+ ♗g8 18 ♖e8+ ♗df8 19 ♗xg6 hxg6 20 ♖xf8+ ♗h7 21 ♖f4 ♖e8 22 ♖hg1 e5 23 ♖h4+ ♗g8 24 ♖d6 ♖c7 25 ♖dxg6 ♗f5 26 ♖6g5 (26 ♖h6!) 26... ♖f7 27 b3 (27 ♖h5!) 27... ♖ac8 28 ♖h5? (28 ♖h5 ♖e6 29 ♖g5 ♖xc4+ 30 bxc4 ♖xc4+ 31 ♗d1 still wins, but now it is going the other way) 28... ♖xc4+ 29 bxc4? (29 ♗b2 is the lesser evil) 29... ♖xc4+ 30 ♗d2 ♖d8+ 31 ♗e1 ♖c3+ 32 ♗f1 ♗h3+ 33 ♖1g2 ♖a1+ 34 ♗e2 ♖d1+ 35 ♗e3 ♖d3 mate, Jacob-Prang, Germany 2000.

Also very dangerous for Black is 10... ♖xg2 11 0-0-0 ♗d7 12 ♗g5 etc. 11 0-0-0 ♗f7 12 f3 ♖h4 13 ♗c5! e5 14 ♗f2! f5 15 g3 ♖f6 16 ♖hf1! ♗a6 17 ♗a3 ♗e6 18 ♗e4! fxe4 19 fxe4 ♗f4 20 gxf4 ♖hd8 21 ♗d6 ♗g8 22 fxe5 ♖h4 23 ♖f4?!

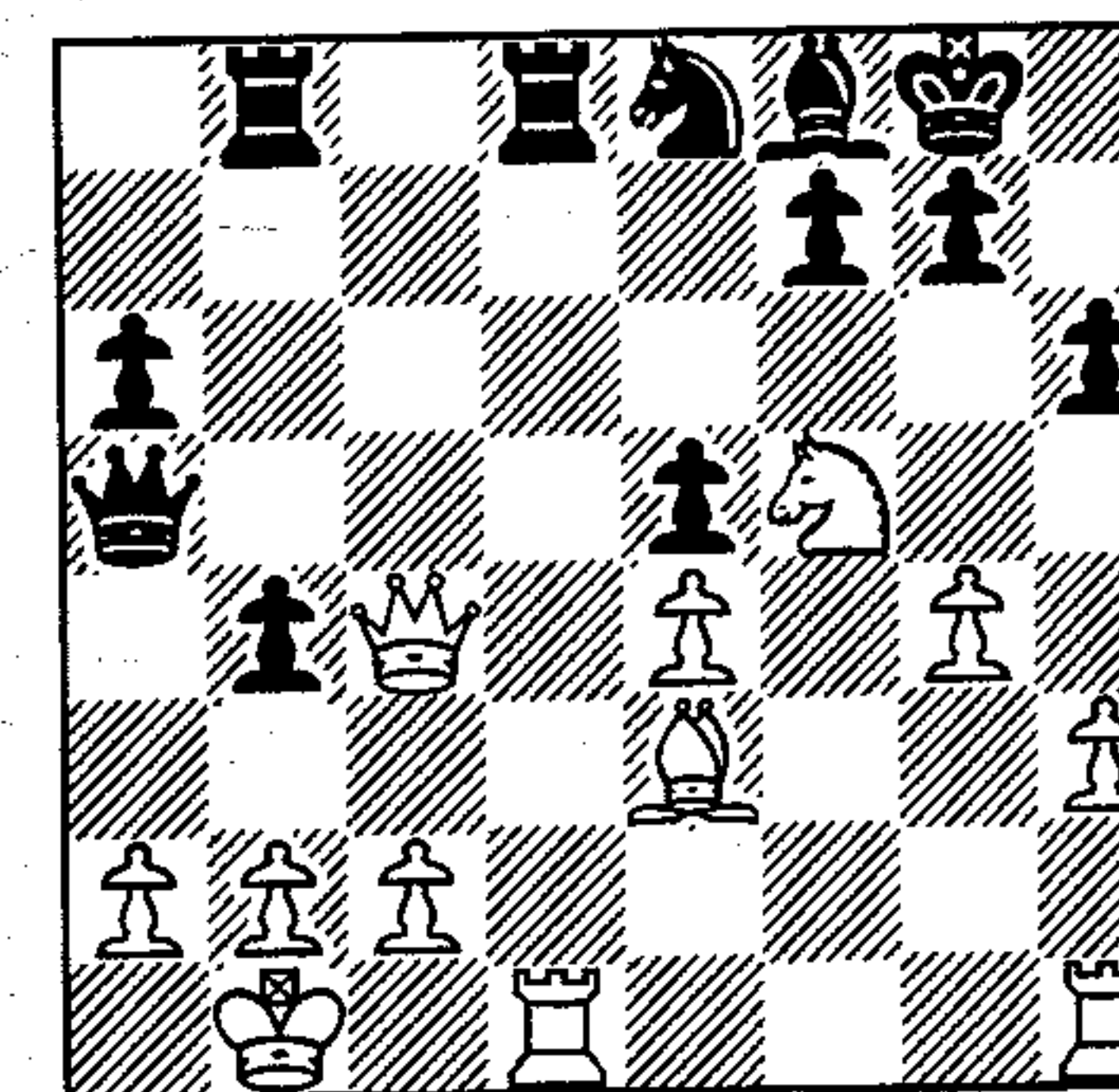
23 ♖e3! was better.

23... ♖xf4+ 24 ♖xf4 ♖e8 25 ♖df1 ♖ad8 26 h4 ♗b8 27 ♗c2 ♗d7 28 ♗c3 ♗f8 29 h5 h6 30 a4 ♗h7 31 b4 a6 32 c5 ♗g5 33 ♗c4! ♗xc4 34 ♗xc4 g6? 35 hxg6 ♗g7 36 ♖f7+! ♗xg6 37 ♖xb7 ♗xe4 38 ♖f4 ♗d2+ 39 ♗d3 ♗g5 40 ♖f2 1-0

Exercise 39: Black to move

Luther-Khalifman

Hastings 1996



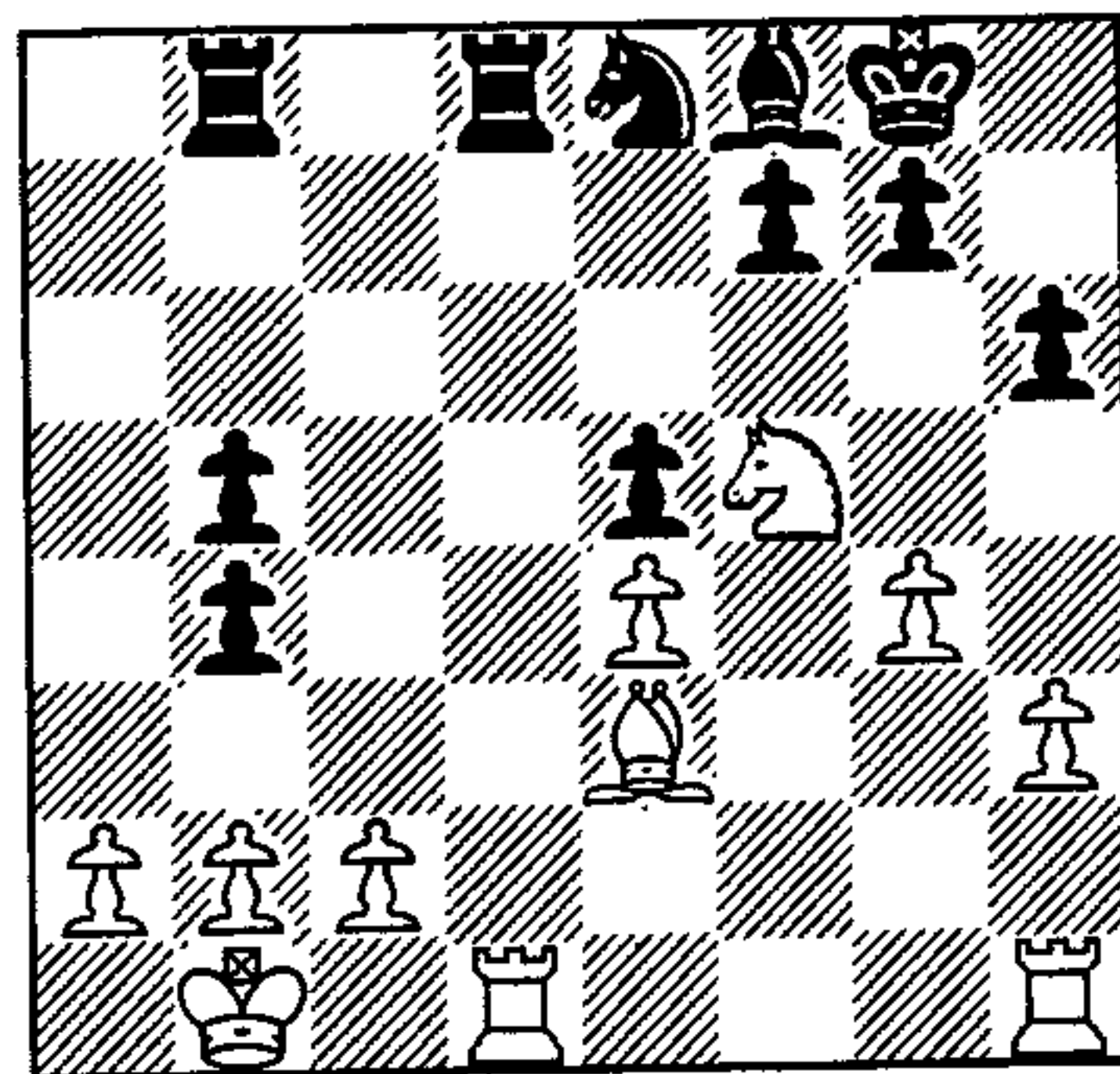
Black seems to be worse. The knight on f5 is strong and f7 is a potentially serious weakness. Trading knights on f5 also seems dangerous for Black as his bishop is clearly the inferior one, although this is not completely clear if the pawn structure alters just slightly. White also has some problems – the e4-pawn is likely to become a weakness later – and the queen is only temporarily well placed on c4. But here we notice that it will go to b3, unless Black is ready to advance his a-pawn immediately. So again we have a situation where White's advantages are mainly short-term while Black's chief advantage is long-term. This leads us to the solution to Black's problems without altering the issue

concerning the e4-pawn.

23...♖b5!

The exchange of queens creates a situation where two pawns will keep a good eye on three and where the e4-pawn will remain slightly weak. However, White should be able to hold the balance.

24 ♖xb5 axb5



25 ♖a7

The alternatives are interesting. 25 g5 hxg5 26 ♖xg5 f6 27 ♖d2 ♖d6! leaves Black with the superior structure. The exchange of knights does nothing about the weakness of the e4-pawn but does limit White's chances of attacking g7. Black is better after both 25 ♖d5 ♖xd5 26 exd5 ♖d6! and 25 ♖d3 ♖f6 26 ♖g3 ♖dc8, intending ...♖c4. Finally 25 ♖xd8 ♖xd8 26 ♖c1 ♖f6 27 ♖g3 produces equality.

With the text White did not realise in time that he had to exchange a pair of rooks to avoid the incoming threats on the a-file.

25...♖a8 26 ♖f2?!

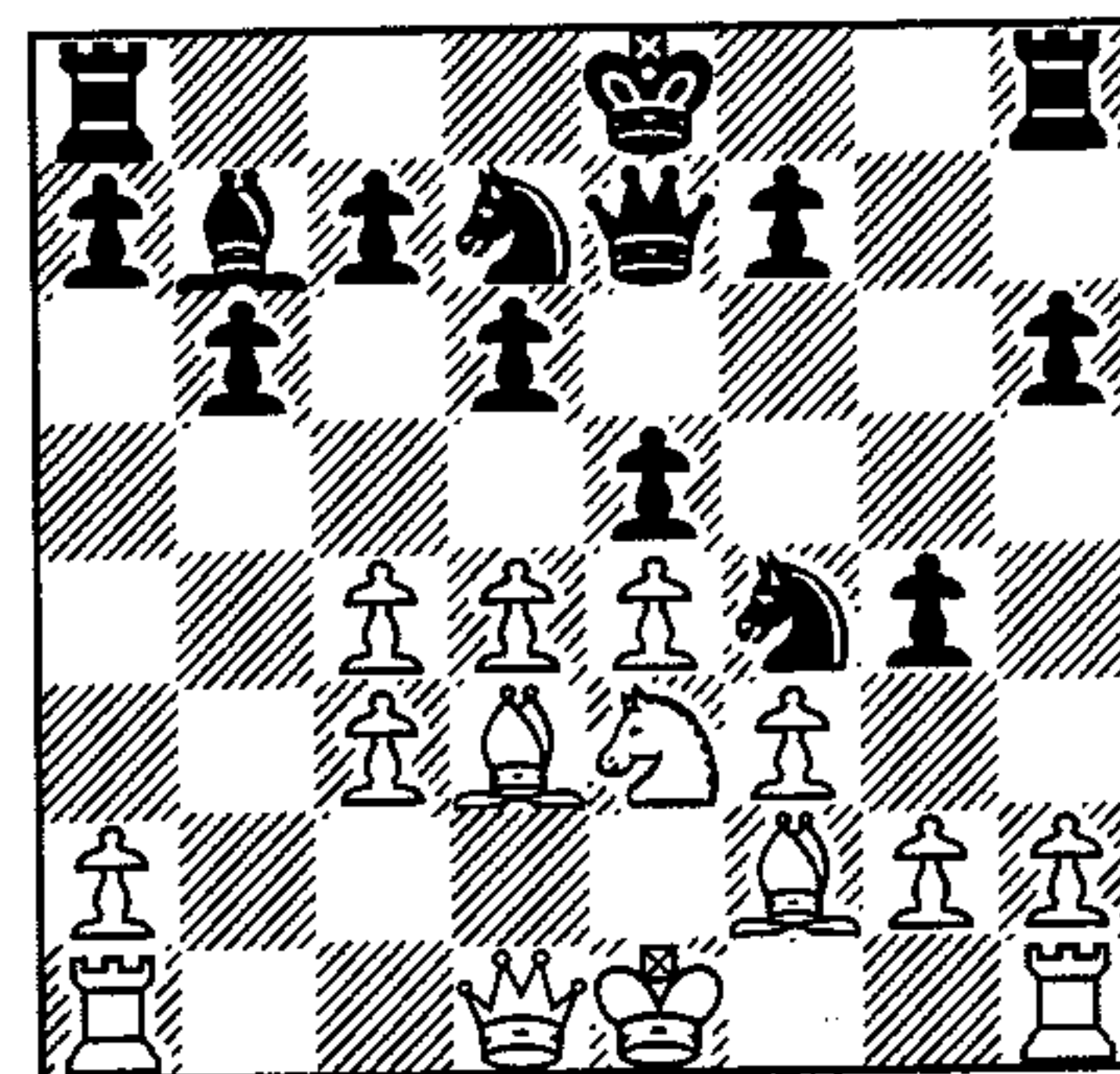
After this White is in trouble. Necessary was 26 ♖xd8 ♖xd8 27 ♖e3 ♖f6 28 ♖g3 with equality.

26...♖dc8! 27 ♖d5 g6 28 ♖g3?!

28 ♖e3 was better.

28...♖a5 29 ♖e1 ♖f6 30 ♖d3 ♖ca8 31 a3 ♖5a6 32 ♖a2 bxa3 33 b4 ♖c6 34 ♖c3?! ♖ac8 35 ♖xc6 ♖xc6 36 c3 ♖c4 37 ♖xa3 ♖xe4 38 ♖xe4 ♖xe4 39 ♖f2 f5 40 gxf5 gxf5 41 ♖d1 f4 42 ♖d5 ♖e2 43 ♖a7 f3 44 ♖xb5 ♖f7! 45 ♖b3 ♖d6 46 ♖d5 ♖e6 47 ♖d1 e4 48 ♖f1 ♖g3 0-1

Exercise 40: White to move
Khalifman-Yemelin
Russia 1996



People have a way of not solving this exercise despite the fact that it is extremely logical and clear. Very often the solutions to these exercises tend to be in some way dependant upon the final evaluation of a resulting position, which can be somewhat complicated – especially when you have to give reasons for your intuitive decisions.

But let us turn to the position. How should we approach the situation? Remember – each position has a primary concept, something that you want to achieve. This is the aim of calculation and problem solving in over-the-board chess. First you define your agenda, then you find a way to pursue it. Here

the main thing is to complete development. My advice is – when you have something you want, first try to see if you can do it directly! In something like 90% of cases (not in studies and problems, but in tournament chess, 9 out of 10 moves) you will have the option to do it straight away. This is such a case.

White wants to castle but also wants to recapture with the queen on f3, as g2-g3 is required to later restrain Black's knight. Therefore the previously played move was 16 ♖c2, before Khalifman discovered the obvious...

16 0-0!

Playing the move you want to play – first make it work.

16...gxf3

The move everybody expects here, but they do not try to make the moves they want to make work! White is already strategically winning. 16...♖g5 17 fxg4 h5 18 ♖d5! ♖xg4 19 ♖xg4 hxg4 20 ♖xf4 exf4 21 ♖e1 also gives White a convincing position according to Khalifman.

17 ♖xf3!

The point. The bishop is not hanging as the natural 18 ♖f5! is practically decisive. This is really not difficult to see when you have the idea. And how do you get the idea? You ask yourself – what moves do I want to make without looking at the immediate tactical aspects? With this knowledge you will be more attuned to seeing such little tactical twists.

17...exd4

17...♖xd3 18 ♖f5 ♖g5 19 ♖h4 ♖f4?! 20 ♖g7+ ♖f8 21 ♖e6+! fxe6 22 ♖xd3, or 17...♖g8 18 ♖c2! 0-0-0 19 ♖g3 and Black is under serious pressure

on the f-file (and this will spread to the kingside).

18 ♖d5!

18 ♖f5 ♖g5 19 cxd4 ♖xf5! 20 ♖h4 ♖h3+! 21 gxf3 ♖g8+ 22 ♖h1 ♖xf3+ 23 ♖xf3 is somewhat better for White, but this is not what one is aiming for. The text is a real killer – and one of those 10% moves that we find slightly surprising and not straightforward – and a clever way to solve the immediate problem of eliminating the knight on f4. Note 18 exd4 ♖xd3.

18...♖xd5

You never fully escape calculation, and you should use it when necessary. Here you need to see things like 18...♖xd5 19 ♖xf4 ♖c5 20 exd5 ♖xd3 21 ♖xd4 ♖e5 22 ♖h4, which is winning.

19 exd5 ♖e5

19...0-0-0 20 cxd4 and Black is positionally lost. The last chance, 20...b5, serves only to illustrate how hopeless the situation is. 19...dxc3 produces a more complicated solution. Most of this could probably have been decided upon with an intuitive decision and need not have been calculated – 20 ♖f5! ♖e5 (20...0-0-0 21 ♖ae1! ♖g5 22 ♖d4 ♖hg8 23 ♖f6) 21 ♖h3! ♖g5 (21...♖xc4 22 ♖ae1 ♖e5 23 ♖h4) 22 ♖h4 ♖d2 23 ♖ae1 ♖d4+ 24 ♖h1 ♖g8 25 ♖e4 ♖d2 26 ♖xe5+! dxe5 27 ♖d7+ ♖f8 28 ♖xf7+! ♖xf7 29 ♖f5+ ♖g7 30 ♖f6+ and mate (all lines given by Khalifman).

20 ♖e4 dxc3?!

This does not meet with Black's ideal agenda – completing development by bringing the king into safety. Yemelin is a true fighter more than anything else, but fighters are often helpless when it

comes to very accurate play. Khalifman gives the following lines:

20...f5 21 ♖xf5! ♜f8 22 ♖h5+ ♖f7 23 ♖xh6 winning, 20...♟xd3 21 ♖xd3 0-0-0 22 ♟xd4 ♜he8 23 ♟f6 ♖e4 24 ♖xe4 ♜xe4 25 ♟xd8 ♟xd8 26 ♜xf7 ♜xc4 27 ♜d1 with excellent chances and 20...♟g6 21 ♖xe7+! ♟xe7 22 ♜ae1 ♟f8 23 ♟h4 ♜e8 24 cxd4 with an overwhelming positional plus.

21 ♟h4 ♖d7 22 ♟f6

The struggle is over. You need not see further than this to be certain.

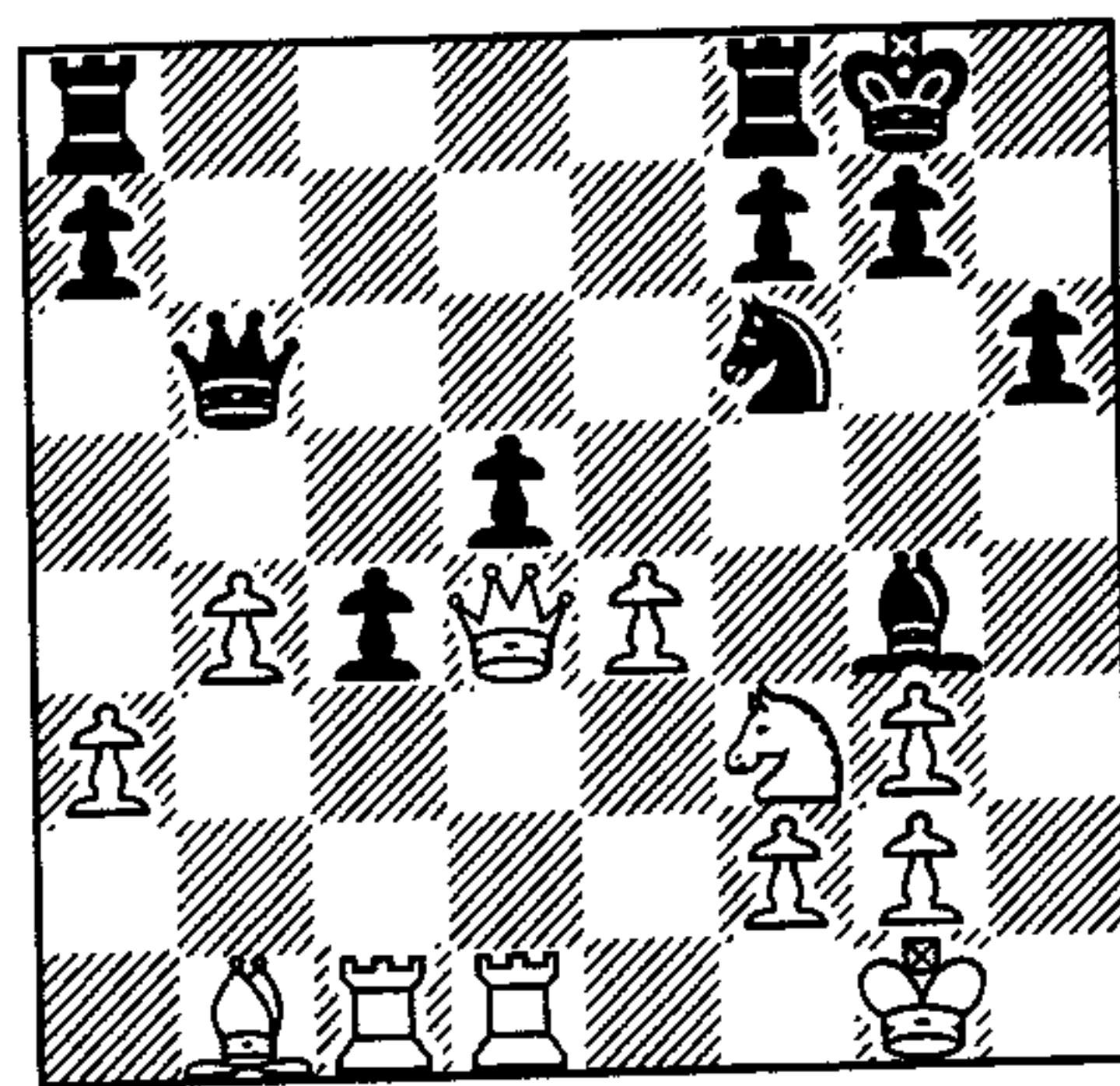
22...♜g8 23 ♜ae1 c6

23...♖g4 24 ♜f4 ♖g6 25 ♖e2 and wins. After 23...♟f8 24 ♖h4 ♖g4 25 ♖xh6+ ♟e8 26 ♜f2 Black has not solved a fraction of his problems, only lost the h-pawn and seen the white rook enter the attack.

24 ♟xe5 dxe5 25 ♖xe5+ ♟f8 26 ♟f5 ♖d8 27 ♟e6 ♜g7 28 ♟xf7! 1-0

White wins in a million ways. One of them is 28...♜xf7 29 ♖h8 mate.

Exercise 41: Black to move
Khalifman-Anand
Groningen 1997



Yet another situation in which a player has yet to complete development,

and this factor is an important part of the solution. White is breaking up the centre, so Black will need to do something about the fact that the c4-pawn will soon be in trouble.

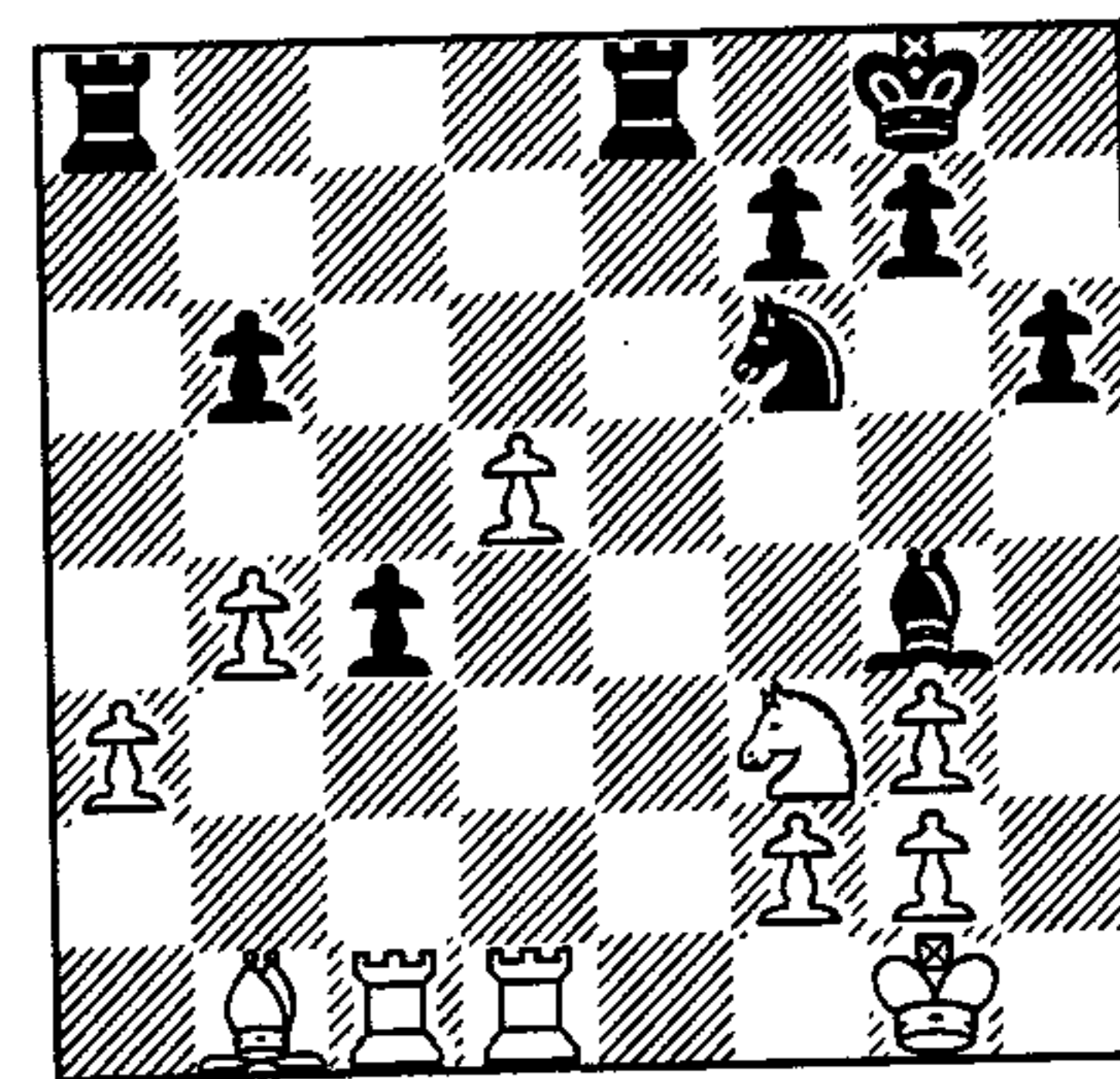
22...♜fe8!

Tactics are used to solve a purely static problem. Here these are based around a tactical trick with ...♜e1+, thus prompting White to trade queens and in turn 'develop' Black's queen's rook.

23 ♖xb6?

White is on his way to very serious trouble. Correct is 23 exd5! (23 e5? ♟xf3 and Black is better thanks to 24 exf6 ♜e1+!) 23...♟xf3 24 ♖xb6 (forced) 24...axb6 (24...♟xd1 is too adventurous since after 25 ♖d4 ♜e1+ 26 ♟h2 ♟g4+ 27 ♖xg4 ♟xg4 28 ♜xe1 Black loses) 25 gxf3 b5 and Black is probably a little better already. His pieces are performing better and his pawns are better protected.

23...axb6 24 exd5



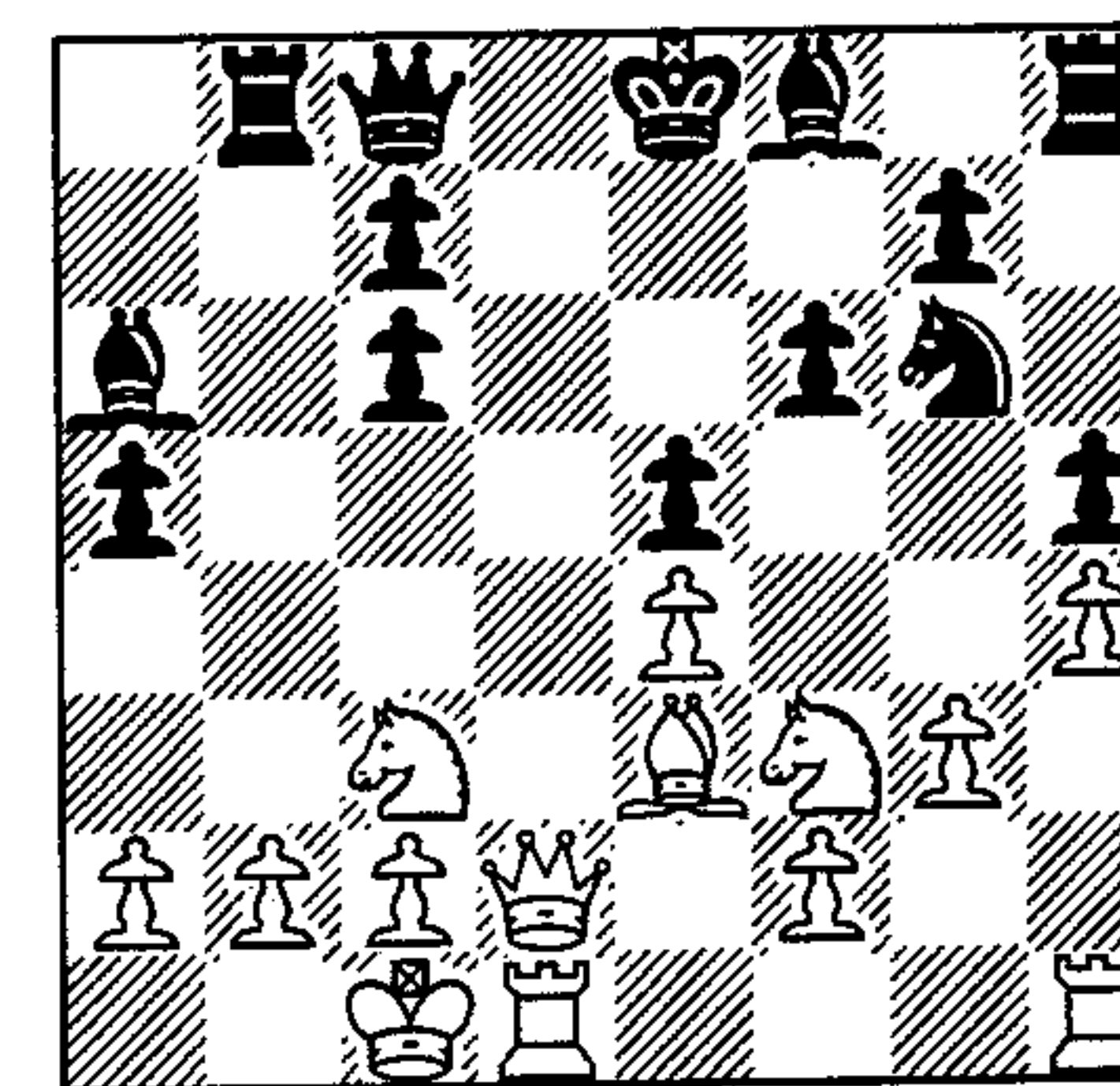
24...b5!

With this move order Black has been freed from the illogical exchange of the bishop for a misplaced and pinned knight. Black has a very pleasant game.

25 ♜c3 ♜ad8 26 ♜e3 ♜xe3 27 fxe3

♜a8! 28 e4 ♜xa3 29 e5 ♟d7 30 e6 fxe6 31 dxe6 ♟xe6 32 ♟d4 ♟g4 33 ♟xb5 ♜b3 34 ♜c1 ♜xb4 35 ♟a2 ♟b6 36 ♟c3 ♟e6 37 ♜b1 ♜xb1+ 38 ♟xb1 ♟d5 39 ♟xd5 ♟xd5 40 ♟f2 ♟f7 41 ♟e3 ♟xg2 42 ♟d4 ♟f1 43 ♟e4 ♟f6 44 ♟f3 ♟f5 45 ♟d1 ♟g5 46 ♟f3 h5 0-1

Exercise 42: White to move
Short-Smyslov
Subotica 1987



Another logical situation, although this time prophylaxis plays a part. It does not take long to see that Black will attack down the b-file, forcing White to nudge the b-pawn forward one square and thus weaken the dark squares in front of the king. Here it is natural to believe that ♟e3-c1 will at one time be necessary because Black's dark-squared bishop cannot be allowed a free hand on the queenside. Furthermore, White needs to think about the organisation of his forces. The pawn advance f2-f4 is a logical plan, but a move like 15 ♟h2?! is so ugly that we should avoid it on purely intuitive grounds. The knights will not have any good squares before f2-f4 and an opening of the position,

but what about the rooks? The d-file, of course, which means that the queen is in the way. All this leads to the exploitation of c5.

15 ♟a7! ♜a8

The line 15...♜b7 16 ♖e3 ♟d6 17 ♟d2!?, intending ♟b3 when the a-pawn is hanging, is what Black is defending against by putting the rook on a8. However, after 17...♖a8 18 ♟c5 ♟f7 here I think Black would have a better fighting chance than in the game, although White is much better.

16 ♖e3 ♖b7 17 ♟c5 ♜b8 18 b3 ♟xc5 19 ♖xc5 ♖b6

19...a4 20 ♜d2 and White is better. Incidentally Smyslov is famous for using an exchange of queens in poor positions as a defensive tool.

20 ♖xb6 cxb6 21 ♜d6

The endgame is much better for White.

21...♟e7

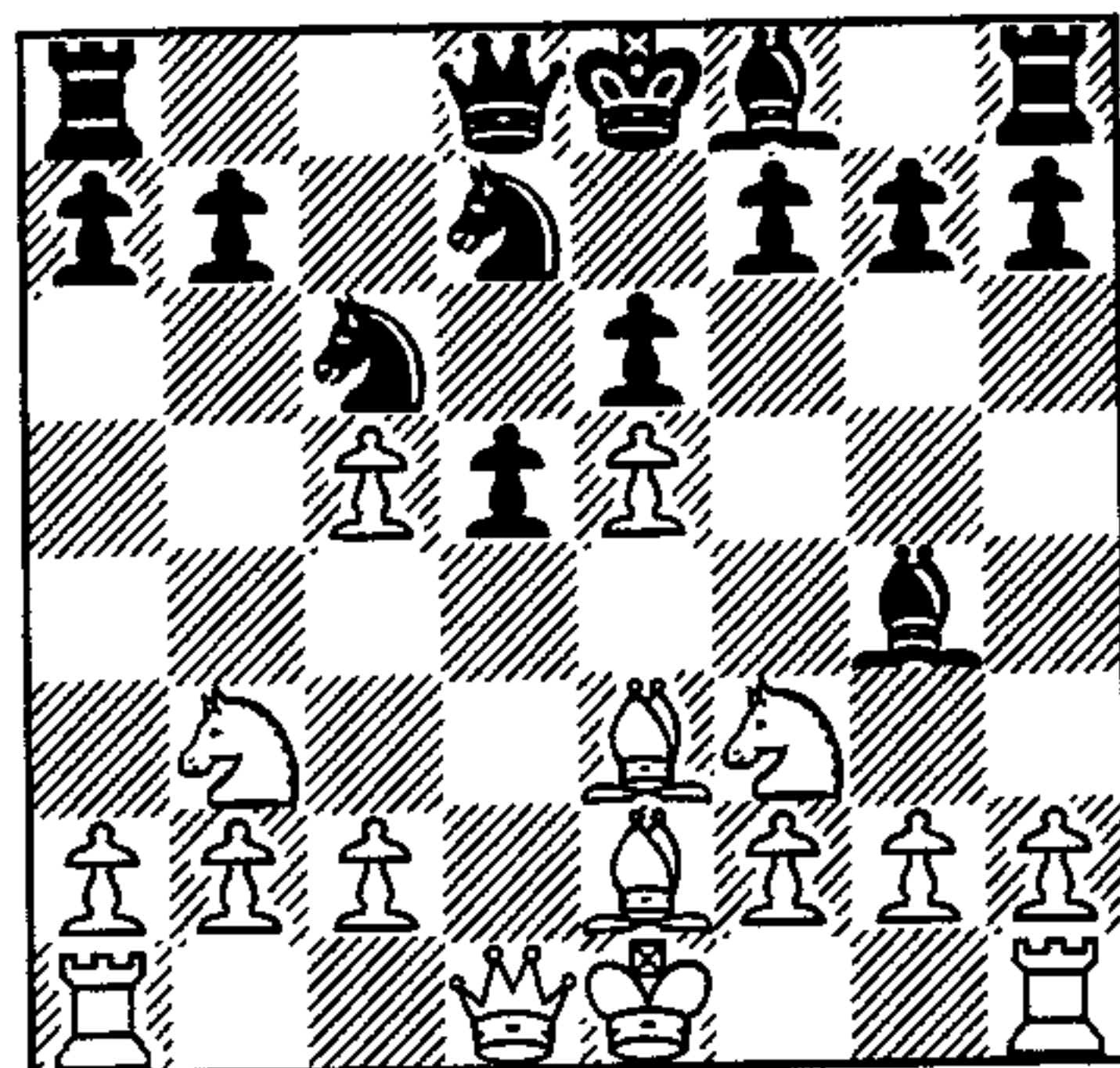
21...♟e7 22 ♜hd1! ♜hd8 23 ♜xc6 ♜xd1+ 24 ♟xd1! and Black does not have any compensation (see ♟d1-e3-f5).

22 ♜hd1 ♟f7 23 ♟e1 ♟c8 24 ♟g2 ♟g4 25 ♜1d3 ♜hc8 26 ♟e3 ♟h3 27 ♟e2 ♜c7 28 f4 exf4 29 ♟xf4 ♟g4 30 ♟xg4 hxg4 31 ♟d2?! ♜e8 32 ♟e6 ♜cc8 33 c4 ♟g6 34 ♟d8+ ♟f8 35 ♟xc6 ♜xe4 36 h5! ♟h8 37 ♟d8! ♜b8 38 ♟e6+ ♟g8 39 ♜d8+ ♜xd8 40 ♜xd8+ ♟h7 41 ♜e8! ♜e5 42 ♟f8+ ♟h6 43 ♜xe5 fxe5 44 ♟d7 ♟f7 45 ♟xb6 ♟d6 46 ♟e3 ♟f5+ 47 ♟f2 g6 48 hxg6 ♟xg6 49 ♟d5 ♟d6 50 ♟c3 ♟f6 51 ♟e2 ♟e6 52 ♟d3 ♟f5 53 ♟e2 ♟d6 54 a3 ♟c6 55 ♟e4 ♟d6+ 56 ♟xe5 a4 57 ♟d4+ ♟d7 58 ♟d5 ♟f5 59 b4

♞xg3 60 ♞c6 ♞e2 61 ♞e5+ ♞c7
62 ♞xg4 ♞c3+ 63 ♞d4 ♞b1 64
♞e3 ♞xa3 65 ♞c3 1-0

Exercise 43: White to move
Short-Adianto

Jakarta (Game 5) 1996



This exercise concerns captures and recaptures. Black is threatening to win the e5-pawn, which White would normally fight to avoid. But there are other issues here. If Black takes on e5 there will be numerous exchanges, after which Black's dark-squared bishop has no obvious square. White's, on the other hand, will be more than happy on d4. And this is how it worked out for Short.

10 ♞fd4! ♞xe2 11 ♞xe2 ♞dxe5 12 f4!

Remember that the key is to establish the bishop on d4, from where it helps White control the board – primary concept.

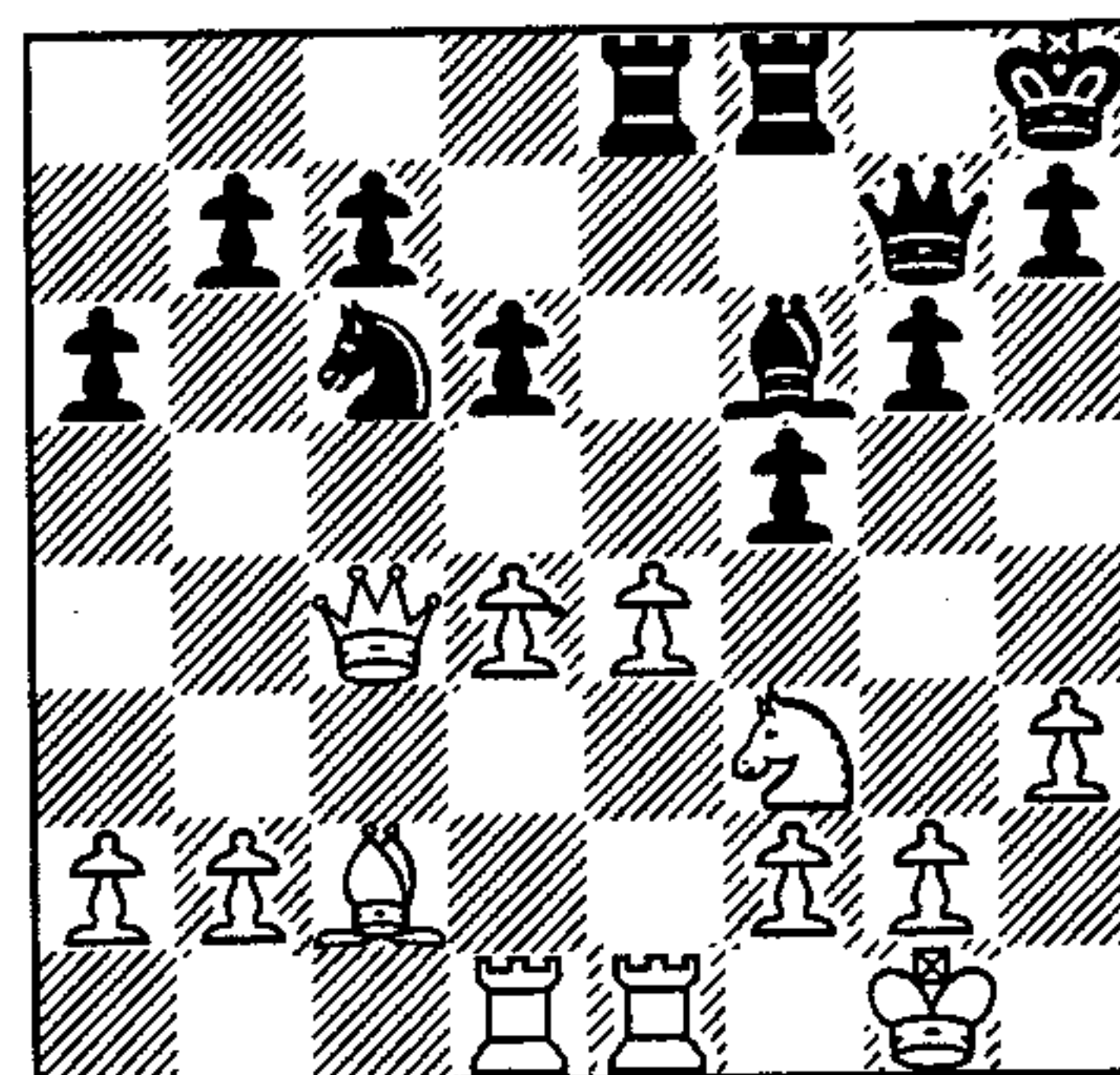
12...♞c4 13 ♞xc6 bxc6 14 ♞d4

Short: 'Utut had overlooked/mis-assessed this continuation. My little German friend, Fritz, does not understand it either. The white bishop dominates the board, making it fiendishly

difficult to develop.' White is clearly better.

14...♞h4+ 15 g3 ♞e7? 16 0-0 h5
17 ♞ae1 0-0-0 18 ♞c1! ♞b7 19
♞d3 h4 20 g4 h3 21 a4 ♞c7 22 b3
♞e7 23 g5 ♞b7 24 ♞f2 e5 25 fxe5
♞xg5 26 bxc4 dxc4 27 ♞f4 ♞h4
28 ♞b1+ ♞a8 29 ♞e3 ♞d7 30 c3
♞g5 31 e6 ♞c8 32 exf7 ♞h4 33
♞e6 1-0

Exercise 44: White to move
Topalov-Short
Novgorod 1996

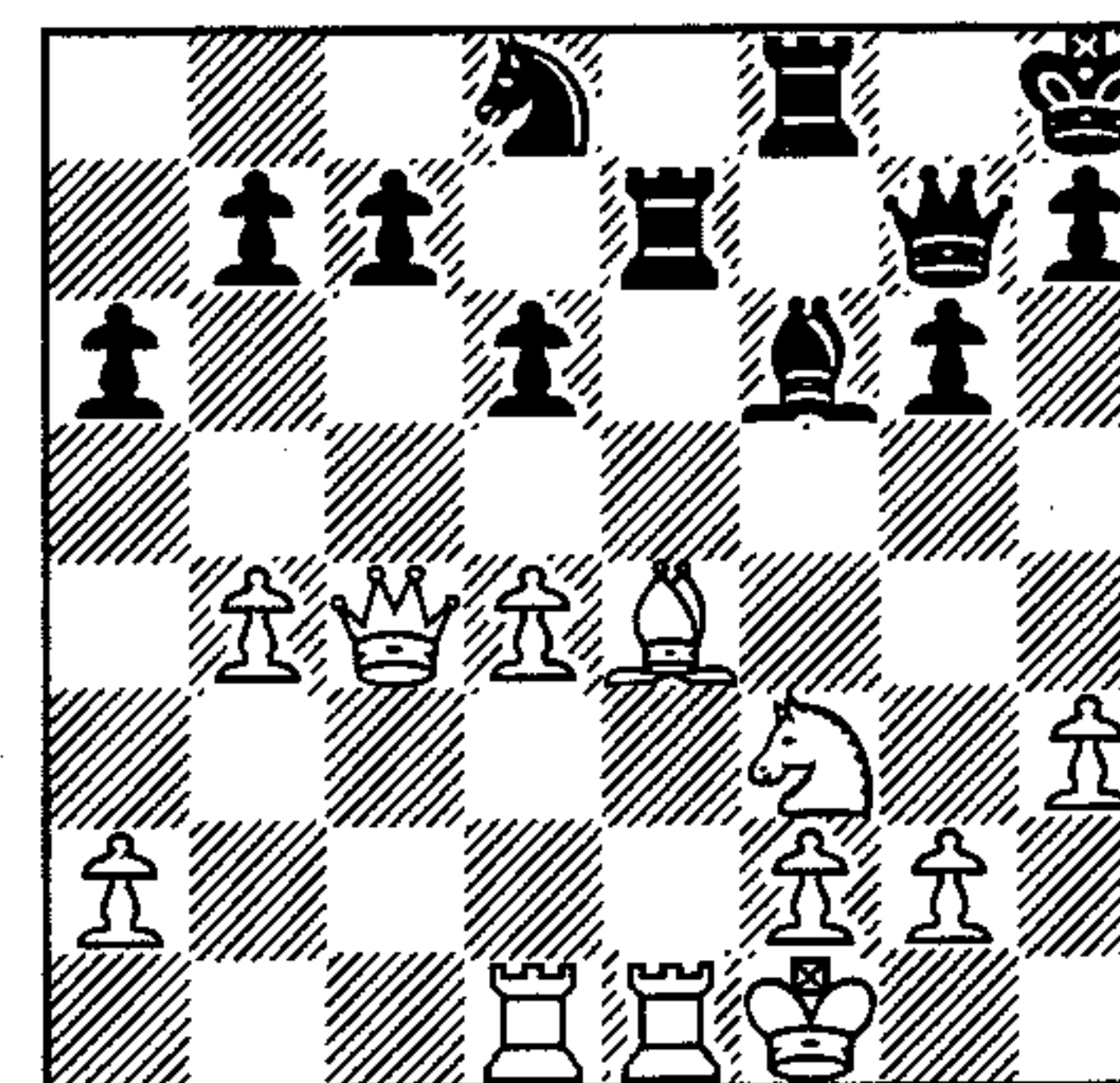


This is a prototypical example of a situation where looking at the pieces individually will lead to a general conclusion. First we start by stating the obvious. The weaknesses in the position are the pawns on g6 and h7 (which White's bishop will constantly target) and those on d4 and f2. There is no reason for White to alter the pawn structure immediately because after 24 exf5 ♞xe1 25 ♞xe1 ♞xd4! the attack on the dark squares proves strong. So let us look for the ideal squares. All of Black's pieces are good and are ready for action, which can also be said of White. The bishop could not be better placed than

on c2, from where the currently important e4-square can be monitored. White's queen sits well on c4, adding weight to the d4-d5 push and, thanks to the central location, not far from any action on either flank (b7 could be a target, as could Black's king). White's knight is under a little pressure, standing on the f-file and having to offer support to the d4-pawn.

Finally White's rooks are quite happy occupying the centre files. It would appear that this is a fruitless exercise as nothing can be improved, but never forget the king! There are two points to be made regarding the monarch – it stands on a dark square and it can, in fact, have an effect on the short line given above.

24 ♞f1! fxe4 25 ♞xe4 ♞d8 26 b4 ♞e7



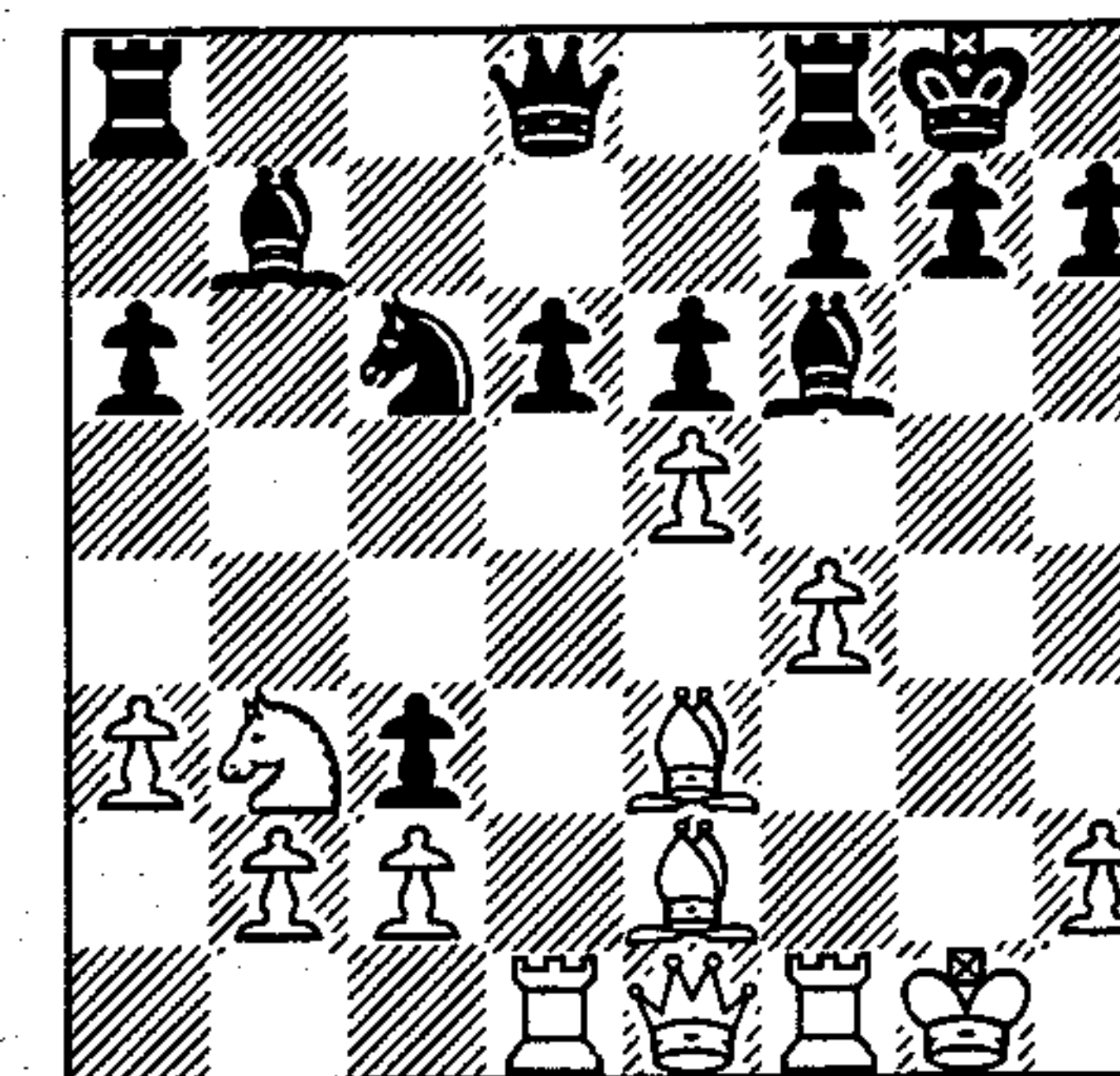
27 ♞e3!

White has a modest advantage. From here on the position changes and the pieces find new and better squares.

27...♞fe8? 28 ♞de1 ♞h6 29 a4 c6!?
30 d5 b5 31 axb5? cxb5 32 ♞a2 ♞g7?
33 ♞xa6 ♞c3 34 ♞c1 ♞xb4 35 ♞xb5 ♞c5
36 ♞e2 ♞f6 37 ♞d3 ♞xe2 38 ♞xe2 ♞e4
39 ♞d3 ♞e7 40

♞a6 ♞a7 41 ♞c4 ♞f7 42 ♞c3 ♞e5
43 ♞b2! ♞e7 44 ♞e1 ♞g7?! 45
♞d4! h5! 46 ♞f3 ♞f7 47 ♞e4 ♞xf3
48 ♞xf6+ ♞xf6 49 ♞xf3 ♞e7 50
♞b1 ♞a7 51 ♞b2 ½-½

Exercise 45: Black to move
Short-Sokolov
Groningen 1997



Black's situation is critical. Nevertheless, as we know, most situations are critical in a hard fought game, or at least there are five or so very complex situations in every game. I remember Yermolinsky writing that for 90% of his moves he was making a clear judgement based on analysis of the position, while for the remaining 10% he was basically just guessing.

The reason why these exercises are more difficult than combinations is because you can never be sure about your answer. You have to develop a strong intuition and a method of analysis of more positional aspects. In this position it is crucial to evaluate correctly the different positions that arise after three moves.

17...♞h4?

Clearly not the right choice. Black

will now have to play ...d6-d5 and the bishop looks stupid on h4. It is also hard to find a decent square for Black's knight, which is slightly passive on c6 because only after e4-e5 does it have prospects of coming back into play.

17...♖xe5! 18 fxe5 ♗xe5 is the right choice for positional/intuitive reasons. But what about the material evaluation? Well, material is normally reflected in the abilities of the remaining pieces (the key reason for positional sacrifices – if a piece does not play it does not count). Here White would be in a great shape if after 19 bxc3 he could follow up with ♖d4 and ♗f3, leaving Black with only two pawns for the piece. But Black can prevent this by developing a piece with tempo with 19...♖c8!, when Short had apparently overlooked that after 20 ♖d4 Black has 20...♖xc3! with a strong position. Therefore White will have to play 20 c4, after which Black has 20...f5! with the idea of mobilising the only remaining inactive piece – the rook on f8. Note that the queen is more or less active as its ideal square is h4 and it can go there in one move. If a piece is capable of making threats like this it will be able to enter the attack with great strength as the opponent cannot proceed with his own active ideas.

Slightly passive is 17...♗e7 18 ♖xc3 (18 exd6?! chooses too soon for no reason and favours Black after 18...♗xd6 19 ♖xc3 ♖e7!) 18...♖b8 19 exd6 ♗xd6 20 ♖c5, which is playable but White has a serious (though not enormous) edge in the shape of the bishops, particularly since with this structure it is easy to see passed pawns on both sides in the endgame.

17...cxb2!? 18 exf6 ♖xf6 has been suggested by some students, but I feel that this is far from good. White can simply play 19 ♗d3 and it is difficult to imagine a situation where the pawn will seriously threaten to promote. The key is that Black does not have anything else going in the position, and White has ♗e3-d2-c3 coming, so something needs to happen soon or White will be doing fine. Also 19 ♖xd6 ♖g6+ 20 ♖g3 ♖xc2 21 ♖d2 ♖fd8 22 ♗d3 ♖c3 23 ♗b6 is not so easy to get a hold on. Black is going to be a rook down, but what are the consequences? So the bottom line is that I feel that this line is inferior for Black after 19 ♗d3 (from a principal point of view) but that this should be tested in a five game match with *Fritz*! Nonetheless, this is better than ...♗h4.

18 ♖xc3 d5

I do not like this move. 18...♖e7 19 ♖xd6 ♖c8 is better, offering Black some compensation. Here we are in the traditional case of forcing play, where the forcing line seems to give White good prospects, and Black should therefore try to steer the game into more murky waters. It would be silly to voluntarily set off on a track that might lead to a forced loss in the hope that the opponent will not be able to see it. I tried to explain this to a junior earlier this year, but he was so convinced about his own abilities that he somehow forgot that I could play, that what he saw I would see too.

19 ♖c5 ♖c7 20 f5!

White has a serious attack now. Black has nothing.

20...d4?

And now he just loses in one move.

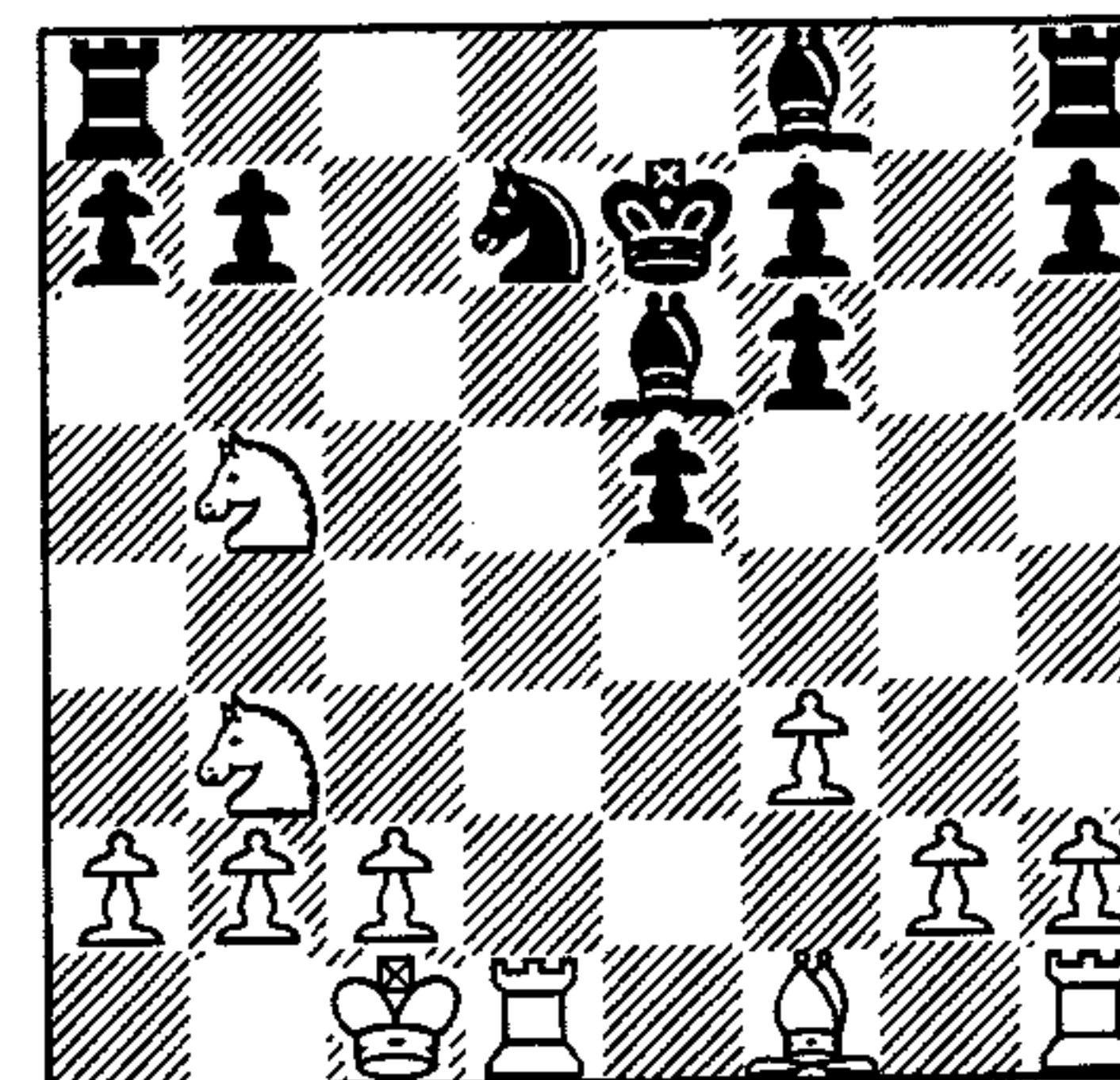
20...♗c8! was necessary. Take a look at the original position and we can see that Black's prospects have seriously worsened since then, with both bishops having declined in worth. White has some advantage.

21 ♖xd4 ♖xd4 22 ♖xd4 ♗d5

Losing, although Short points out that after 22...♗e7 23 ♖xb7 ♖xb7 24 f6! ♖fd8 25 ♖g4 ♗f8 26 fxg7 ♗e7 27 ♖h5 Black loses too much material.

23 ♖xh4 ♖xe5 24 ♖d4 ♖xd4 25 ♗xd4 e5 26 ♗e3 a5 27 ♖d1 1-0

Exercise 46: White to move
Seeman-Short
Tallinn 1998



This position is rather dangerous for White. Let us try to address the concepts that are immediately apparent. Black has the two bishops. Black has the open g-file. Black has a pawn majority in the centre. White has a lead in development. Did I miss anything? Perhaps the weakness of the f5-square, but can it be exploited?

And now to weaknesses. Black might be a little bit vulnerable on the light squares, but g2 is also a potential target. The main problem for White in this

position is that his knights have no ideal squares. The b5-knight can find two squares in f5 and d5, but which one is best? The solution is based on tactics. Note that d6 is not really an ideal square as White can never fully gain control over a dark square that is so far into the enemy camp.

14 ♖d6?!

Leading to trouble. The thing about this move is that it changes none of the concepts listed above and therefore does little good.

14 ♖a5 ♗h6+ 15 ♖b1 ♖c5 looks good for Black. The knights on a5 and b5 contribute little to the position in a positive way, and tactical stuff like 16 b4 ♖a4 appears to be more problematic for White than for Black.

The right option must be to eliminate Black's advantage of the bishop pair and improve the control over the light squares with 14 ♖c7!, when 14...♗h6+ 15 ♖b1 ♖ad8 16 ♖d5+ ♗xd5 17 ♖xd5 ♖c5! 18 ♗c4 ♖xd5 19 ♗xd5 ♖d8 20 c4 ♖xb3 saw Black only very slightly worse in the endgame (which he managed to draw) in Popov-Tseshkovsky, Russia 1997.

14...b6 15 ♗b5

White is short of 'easy' moves. 15 ♗d3? is an example of the Esben Lund expression: *When I think I am clever I am really stupid*. I know that, with regards to deciding on 15 ♗d3, we can follow my claim that 90% of the moves you really want to play can simply be played. But here, unfortunately, we are dealing with the remaining 10%, since after 15...♖xd6 16 ♗e4+ ♖c7 17 ♗xa8 ♗h6+ Black wins.

15 ♗c4 ♗h6+ 16 ♖b1 ♖hd8 is good

for Black, I think. After ♙xe6 fxe6 White's knight sits pretty on d6 with nowhere to go; perhaps the bishop will eventually tell.

15...♖d8 16 ♖d3 ♗h6+ 17 ♔b1 ♕b8!?

Fritz suggests an even stronger continuation in $17...a6$ $18 ♗c4 e4!!$ (Short: 'which was way too difficult for a patzer like me') $19 ♖d4 exf3$ $20 gxf3 ♕e5$ $21 ♗xe6 fxe6$ and Black wins a pawn, and most likely the game. In the game White could have put up more resistance but still had a difficult task ahead of him.

18 ♖hd1

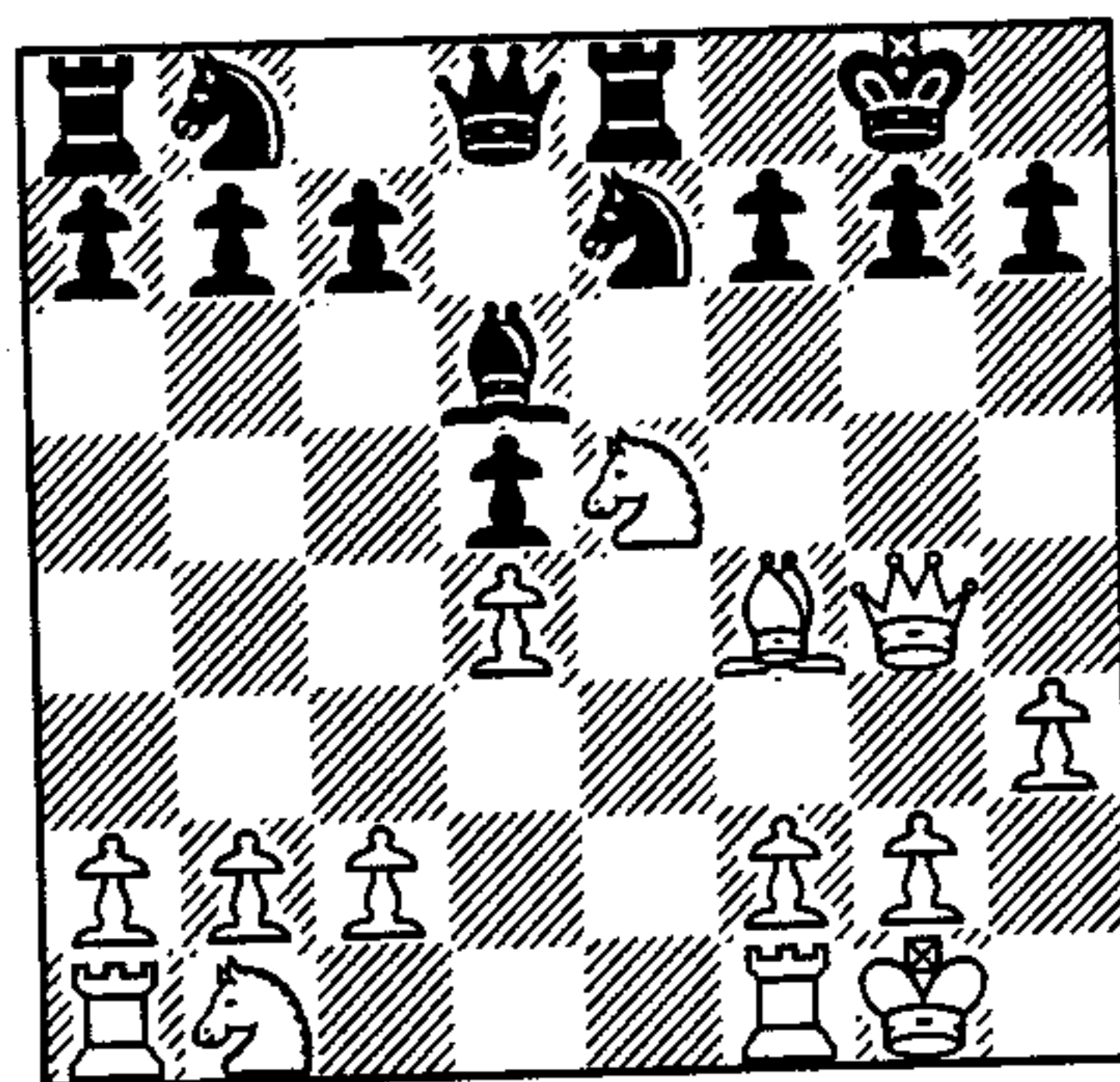
$18 ♕e4 f5!$ and after $...♗f6$ Black's position is favourable, with the two bishops and the open g-file.

18...a6 19 ♗c4 ♖xd6 20 ♖xd6 ♗xc4 21 ♖xb6 ♗e3! 22 ♖b4?!

$22 ♖b7+$ is preferable.

22...♖c8 23 ♕a5 ♗b5 24 a4 ♗c5 25 ♖h4 ♗d7 26 ♖d3 ♗d4 27 ♖b3 ♕c6 28 ♕xc6+ ♗xc6 29 c3 ♗d5 30 ♖a3 ♗f2! 31 ♖h5 ♖g8 32 c4 ♗xc4 33 g3 ♗d4 34 ♖xh7 ♖b8 0-1

Exercise 47: Black to move
Gurevich-Short
Manila 1990



Black can develop normally and hope that White, after a trade on e5, will try to cling on to the e5-pawn with passive moves. But if White instead tries to quickly organise a counterattack against d5 he will be able to hold the balance. So instead Black should look at the pawn structure and put the question to White as to the efficacy of his bishop. As a student pointed out, this works very well with Silman's idea of imbalances.

11...♗xe5!

From here on the knights will dominate. The bishop cannot find a good square. The alternatives give White a chance to hold the balance.

$11...♕ec6!?$ $12 ♕c3! ♕xe5$ $13 dxe5 ♗xe5$ $14 ♖fe1! ♕c6$ ($14...♗xf4$ $15 ♖xe8+ ♗xe8$ $16 ♗xf4 c6$ $17 ♗c7 ♗d7$ $18 ♖e1 f6$ $19 ♖e7$ is more than just compensation...) $15 ♗xe5 ♖xe5$ ($15...♕xe5$ $16 ♗d4 ♗g5$ $17 ♗f1 ♖ad8$ $18 ♕xd5 c6$ looks good for Black but White seems to be holding everything together with tactics after $19 h4!!$, with the key idea of $19...♗h5$ $20 ♕e7+$! and White is doing well) $16 ♖xe5 ♕xe5$ $17 ♗d4$ with equality.

$11...♕bc6$ $12 ♕c3!$ $♗xe5$ ($12...♕xd4?!$ $13 ♕xf7!$ looks good for White) $13 ♗xe5 ♕xe5$ ($13...♕g6$ $14 ♗g3$ is interesting but, compared with the game, the knight seems less appropriate on c6) $14 dxe5 ♕g6$ $15 ♖fe1!$ and White keeps the balance as in the lines above.

12 ♗xe5 ♕g6

Now Black has a slight but serious advantage.

13 ♗g3

$13 ♗g3$ is not good. The bishop is

still exposed on e5. Black can use the momentum with $13...♕c6!$ $14 ♗xc7 ♗d7$ when White is in trouble. A possible line would be $15 ♖d1 ♖ac8$ $16 ♗d6 ♖e6$ $17 ♗a3 ♖e4$ and White is still struggling with development. Note that White does not have time for $13 ♖e1$ in view of $13...f6!$, winning a piece.

13...♕d7!

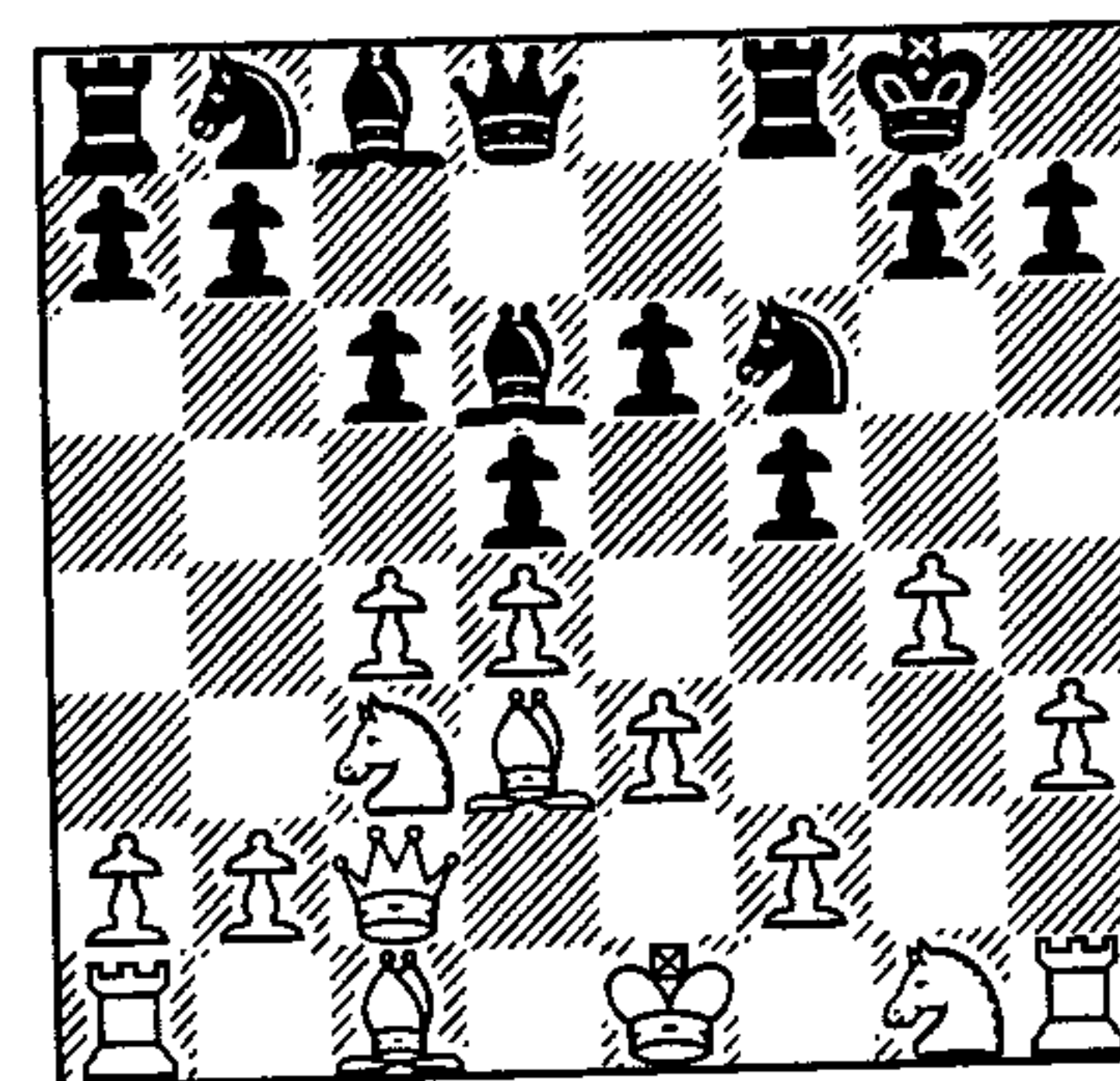
Coming to the ideal square on e4 with gain of time.

14 ♕d2 ♕f6 15 ♗f3 c6 16 ♗b3 ♗b6 17 ♗xb6 axb6

Black has a better endgame. The bishop simply cannot find a good way to join the game.

18 a3 ♕e4! 19 ♕xe4 ♖xe4 20 ♖fd1 b5 21 ♗f1 f6 22 f3 ♖e6 23 ♖e1 ♗f7 24 ♖xe6 ♗xe6 25 ♖e1+ ♗d7 26 ♗e2?! h5! 27 ♗d3 h4 28 ♗h2 ♕e7 29 ♗f4 ♕f5 30 ♗d2 b6 31 ♖e2 c5 32 ♗e3 b4! 33 axb4 c4+ 34 ♗c3 ♕d6 35 ♖e1 ♖a4 36 ♗d2 ♖xb4 37 ♖a1 ♖xb2-+ 38 ♖a7+ ♗e6 39 ♖xg7 b5 40 ♗f2 b4 41 ♗c1 c3 42 ♗xh4 ♕f5 0-1

Exercise 48: Black to move
Gelfand-Short
Tilburg 1990



Here White, rather unwisely, has weakened his kingside by advancing with $g2-g4$ and $h2-h3$. This has not only compromised the kingside structure but also slowed down his development. Not surprisingly Black is able to exploit this factor through rapid development and pressure against f2. Thus Black should try to generate an initiative.

8...♕a6!

Gaining time and, after the forced reply...

9 a3

...Black can gain even further time with

9...dxc4 10 ♗xc4 b5!

Again time is crucial. When you attack it is always good to send your pieces into battle while simultaneously pushing your opponent back.

11 ♗e2

$11 ♗a2$ $b4$ $12 ♕a4 ♗h8$ clearly favours Black according to Short.

11...b4 12 ♕a4 bxa3 13 bxa3 ♕e4

Short prefers Black but I am not sure that this is the whole story. White is uncoordinated, has a ruined pawn structure and is seriously behind in development. In practise it was not hard for Short to finish off Gelfand.

14 ♕f3 ♗a5+ 15 ♗f1 ♕c7! 16 ♕b2 ♗a6 17 ♕c4

$17 ♗xa6!$ $♗xa6+$ $18 ♗g2$ was the best defence according to Short.

17...♗d5 18 ♖g1 fxf4 19 ♖xg4 ♕g3+?!

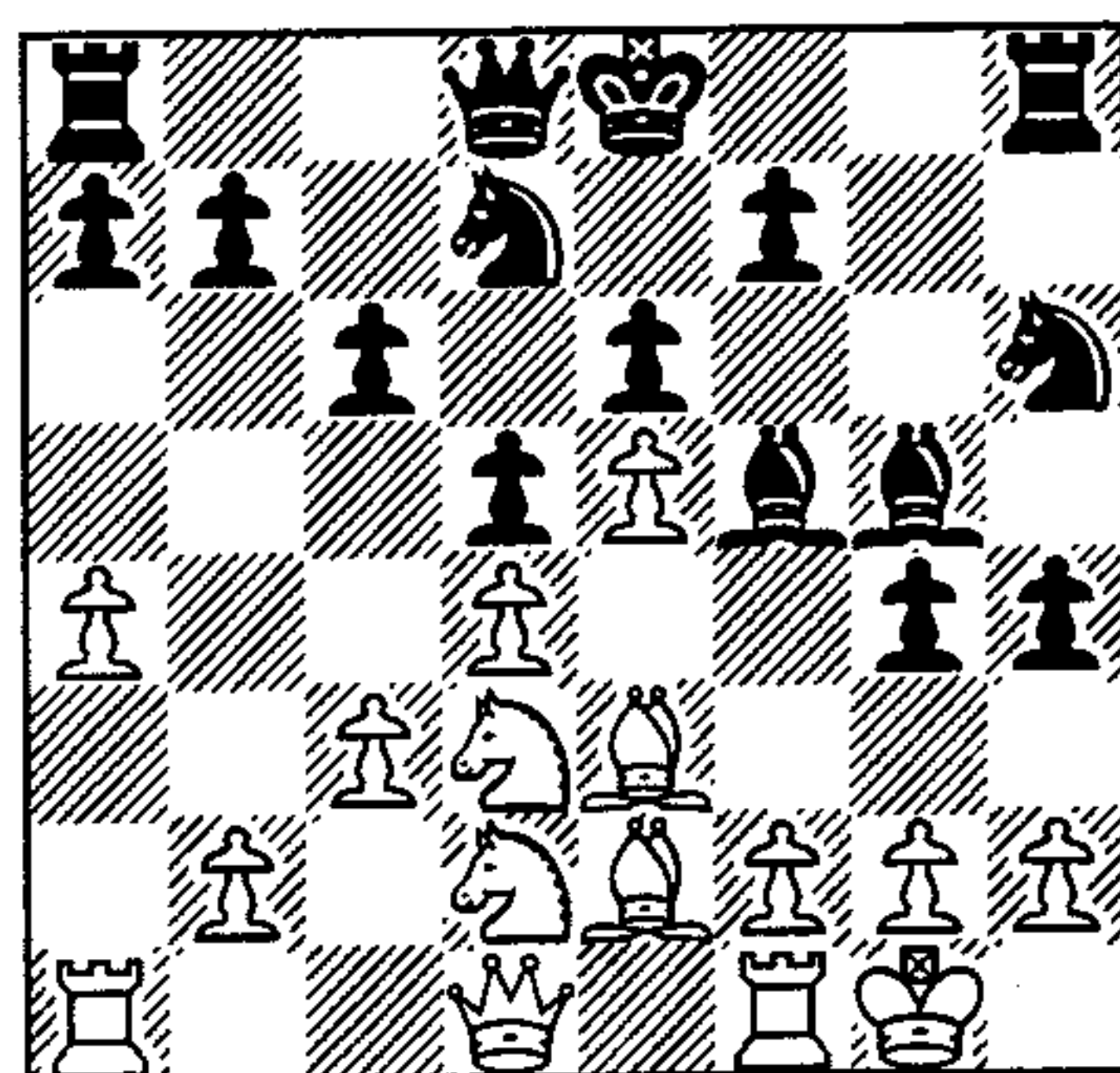
$19...♕xf2!$ $20 ♗xf2 ♗xc4$ $21 e4 ♗xd4+$ $22 ♗e3 ♗xa1$ $23 ♗xc4 ♗xa3$ wins directly.

20 ♖xg3 ♗xg3 21 ♗g2! ♗h4 22 e4 ♗h5 23 ♕xh4

$23 ♕ce5!$ $♗xe2$ $24 ♗xe2$ was better.

23...♖xh4 24 ♔e3 ♜f6 25 ♞h1
♞af8 26 ♞h2? ♞xf2+ 27 ♔xf2
♞xf2+ 28 ♖h1 ♖e1+ 0-1

Exercise 49: White to move
Short-Kamsky
Tilburg 1990



Once again it is Short who is alone in finding the right move in a difficult position. When we talk about squares here we are particularly concerned with the dark squares on the kingside, where Black has adopted an aggressive stance. He is trying to push further with ...g4-g3 to prise open White's defensive wall and damage the dark squares. Furthermore the h6-knight will soon come to f5 to exert more pressure on the dark squares.

White has two fairly poor pieces – his d2-knight and the queen. Consequently these two unemployed workers should join in the struggle for those dark squares, for if White wins this fight he will have a clear advantage due to the long-term concessions Black has made in his search for an early initiative on the kingside. Hence White's next.

13 ♖c1!!

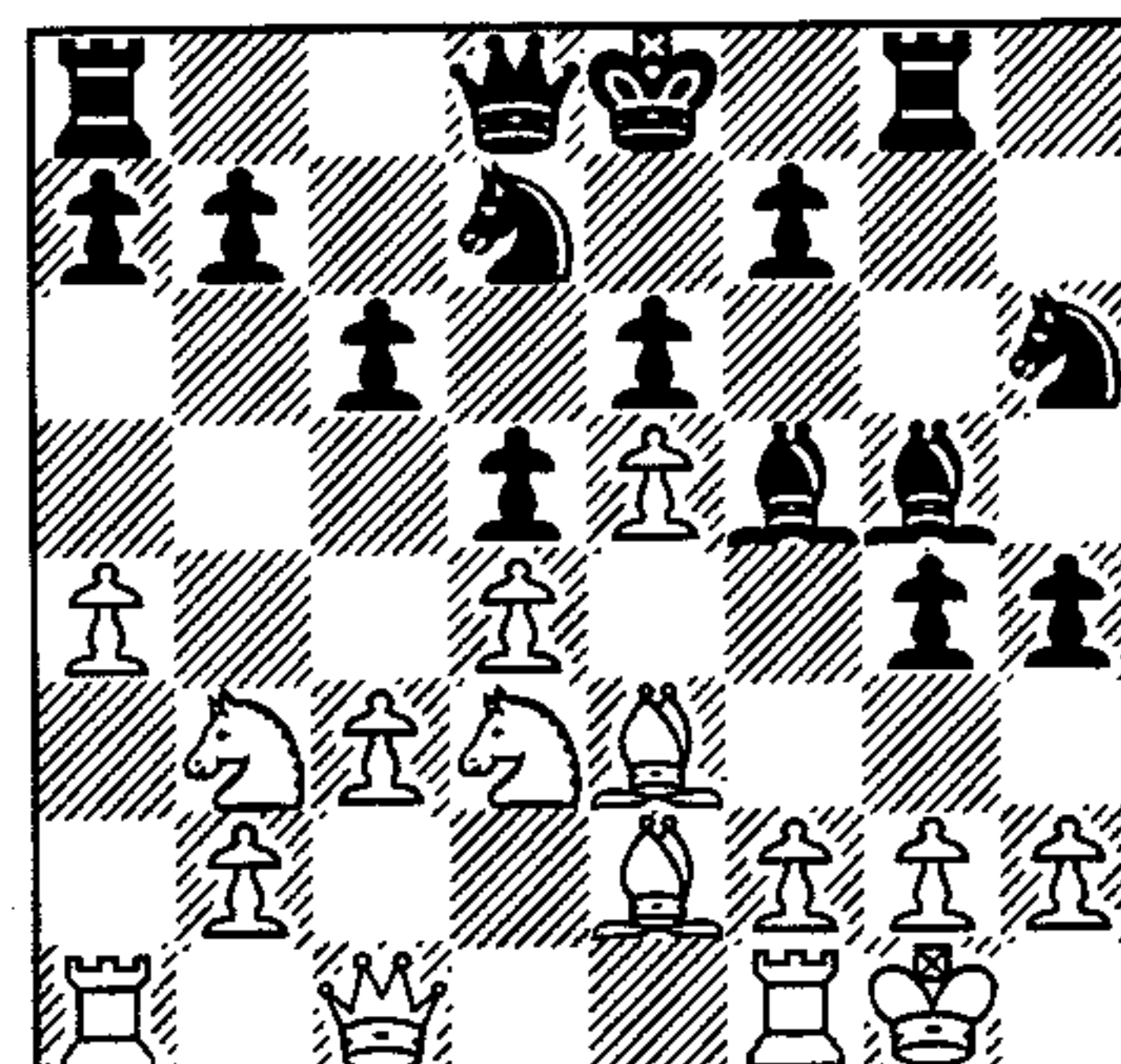
As well as preparing to monitor the

dark squares on the kingside White also toys with the idea of c3-c4 in the event of Black castling queenside.

13...♞g8

Overprotection. White was threatening 14 ♖c4! here.

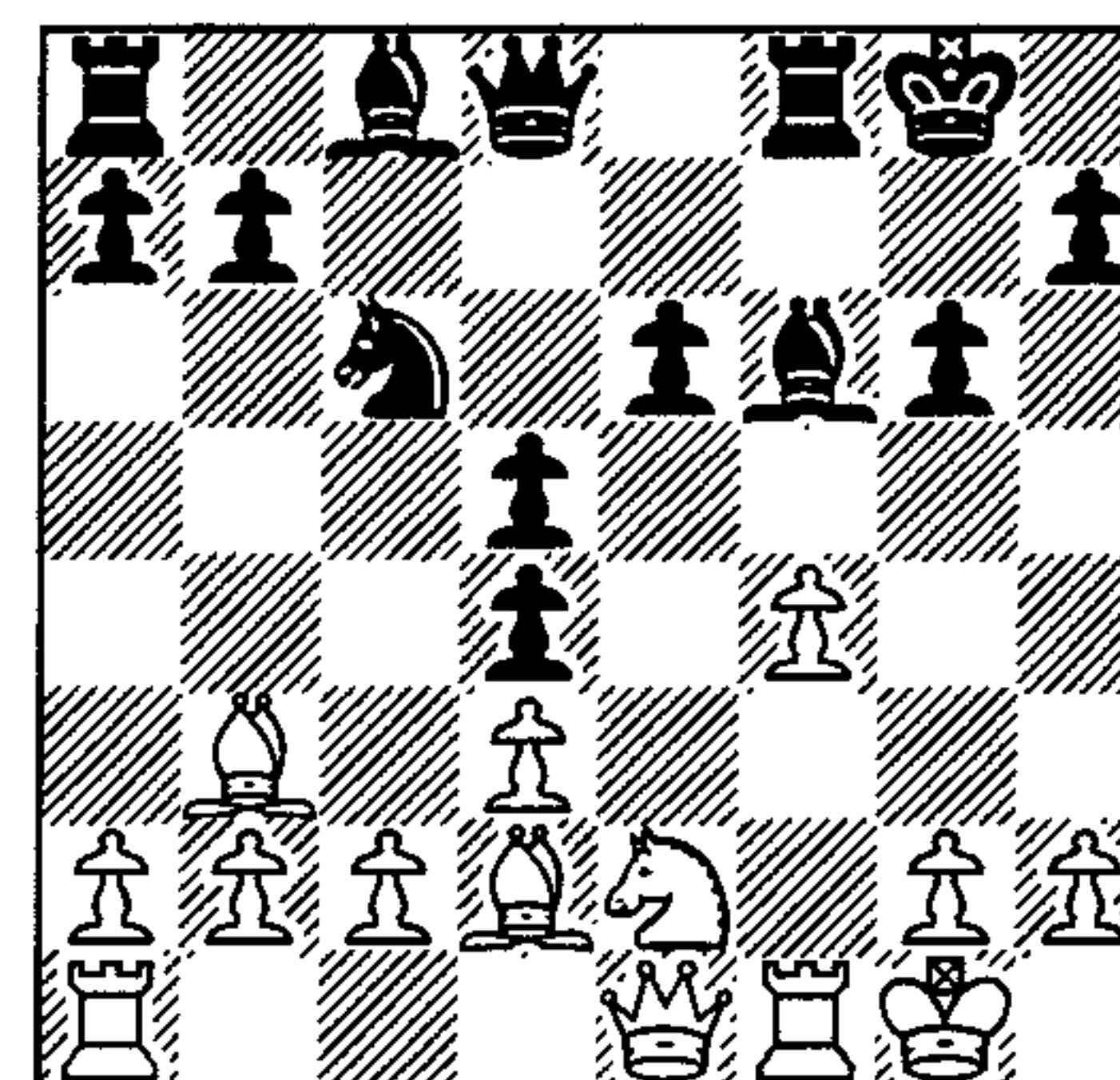
14 ♖b3



14...♔xd3?!

Giving White a clear and lasting advantage. Correct is 14...♖e7 15 c4 ♔xe3 16 fxe3 0-0-0 17 cxd5 exd5 18 a5 a6 19 ♖dc5 when White certainly has far more dangerous threats against Black's king, with sacrifices in the air as well as the rook manoeuvre ♞a1-a4-b4 ♞f5. ♔xd3 a5?! 16 f4! gxf3 17 ♞xf3 b6 18 ♔xg5 ♖xg5 19 ♖xg5 ♞xg5 20 ♞h3 ♖e7 21 ♞xh4 ♖g4 22 ♞e1 ♞ag8 23 g3 c5 24 ♖d2 c4 25 ♔c2 f5! 26 exf6+ ♖gxf6 27 ♖f3 ♞h5 28 ♞xh5 ♖xh5 29 ♖f2 ♖d6 30 ♖e5 ♖df6 31 ♔d1 ♖g7 32 g4! ♞b8 33 ♔f3 b5 34 axb5 ♞xb5 35 ♞e2 a4 36 h4 a3 37 bxa3 ♞b3 38 ♞c2 ♞xa3 39 h5 ♖h7 40 ♖g3 ♖e7 41 ♞b2 ♞b3 42 ♞a2 ♞b7 43 ♖f4 ♖e8 44 g5 ♖d6 45 g6 ♖f6 46 h6 ♖f8 47 ♞a8+ ♖de8 48 ♖g4 ♖xg4 49 ♔xg4 ♞e7 50 ♖e5 1-0

Exercise 50: White to move
Short-Gelfand
Brussels 1991



White is not helped by the awkward placing of his knight, but it is not difficult to find a superior square – f3. Thus the solution to this exercise is rather straightforward.

15 ♖h1!

White should not be tempted to play 15 f5 as after 15...gxf5 Black has improved his pawn structure and the situation is far from clear. However, White has a good position after 16 ♖f4 ♖e7 17 ♖h5, but making a mess of things in this way seems to be quite unnecessary.

15...a5 16 a4 ♖d6

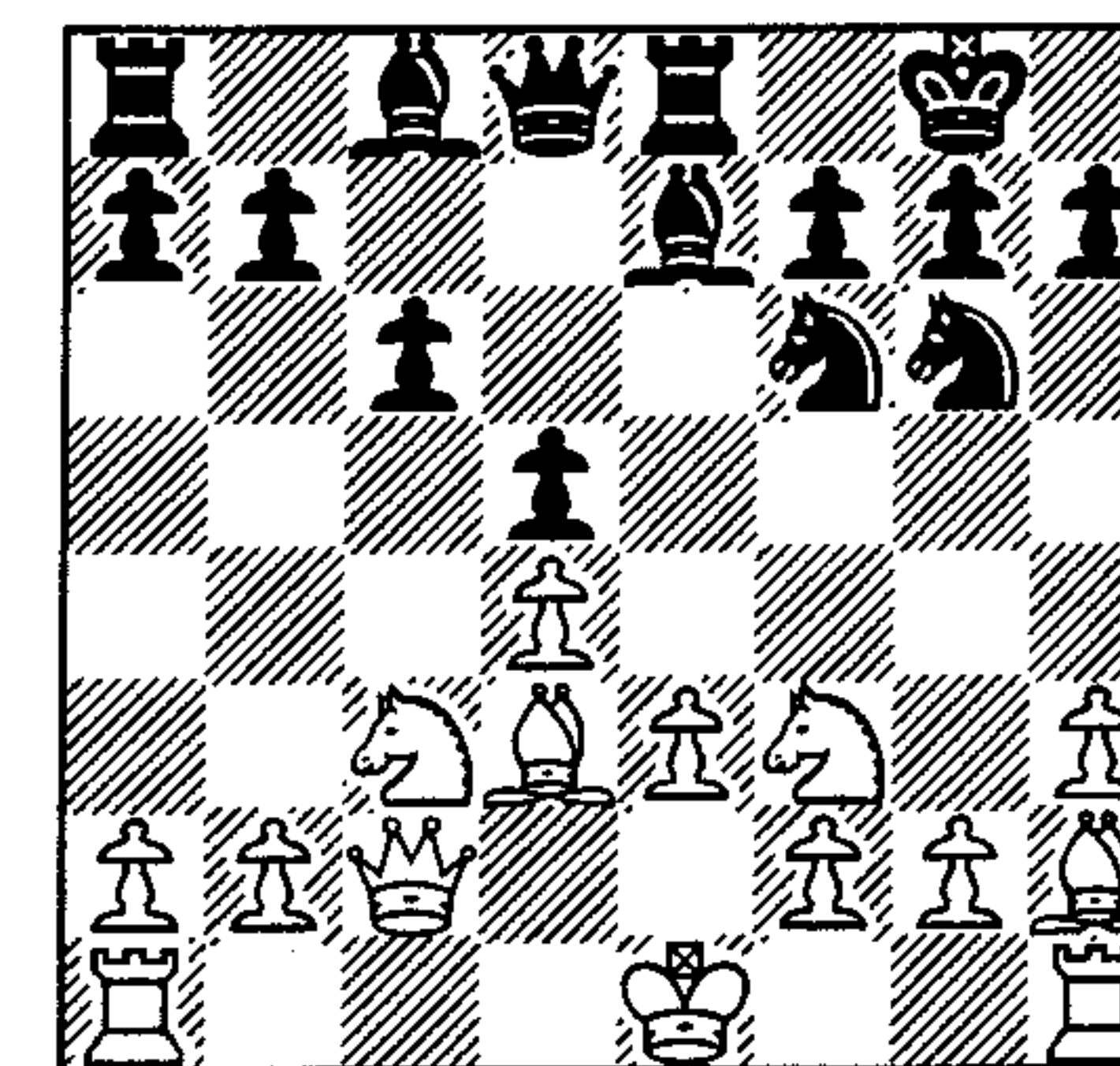
But now if Black plays 16...♖b6 the queen has left the kingside and it is time for 17 f5! gxf5 18 ♖f4 with much more dangerous threats than before.

17 ♖g1 ♔d7 18 ♖f3

White has a slight advantage and went on to win the game:

18...♖b4 19 ♖f2! ♖c5 20 ♔c3! ♖c6 21 ♞ae1 b6 22 ♔d2 ♖b4?! 23 ♖g3 b5 24 f5! exf5 25 ♖e5 ♔e8 26 axb5 ♖xb5 27 ♞xf5 ♖h8 28 ♞xf6! ♞xf6 29 ♖g4 ♞f5 30 ♖h6 ♞h5 31 ♖f4 1-0

Exercise 51: White to move
Gelfand-Short
Brussels 1991



White has no choice regarding which side to castle. His h2-bishop is misplaced for a kingside offensive and, generally, attacking on the kingside after queenside castling is not very good for White in the Classical Exchange lines in the QGD. But Black is threatening to solve all his problems with ...♔d6, after which a level game would arise. Therefore White is practically forced into reacting correctly.

12 ♖e5!

12 0-0? ♔d6 with equality.

12...♔d6 13 f4!

White has an absolute advantage. The bishop on h2 looks funny but this is not permanent because the kingside pawns will keep on rolling (f4-f5 is guaranteed!). And Black is really struggling to get something out of his minor pieces. White's advantage is best illustrated by considering future plans.

13...c5 14 0-0 c4 15 ♔e2 ♔b4

15...h5! 16 ♖xg6 fvg6 17 ♖xg6 ♞xe3 18 ♔xh5 ♖xh5 19 ♖xh5 ♔e6 with advantage for White has been suggested by Short as a means of generat-

ing counterplay. But the text is hopeless.

16 f5 ♘f8 17 ♙f3 ♙xc3 18 bxc3 ♙d7 19 g4

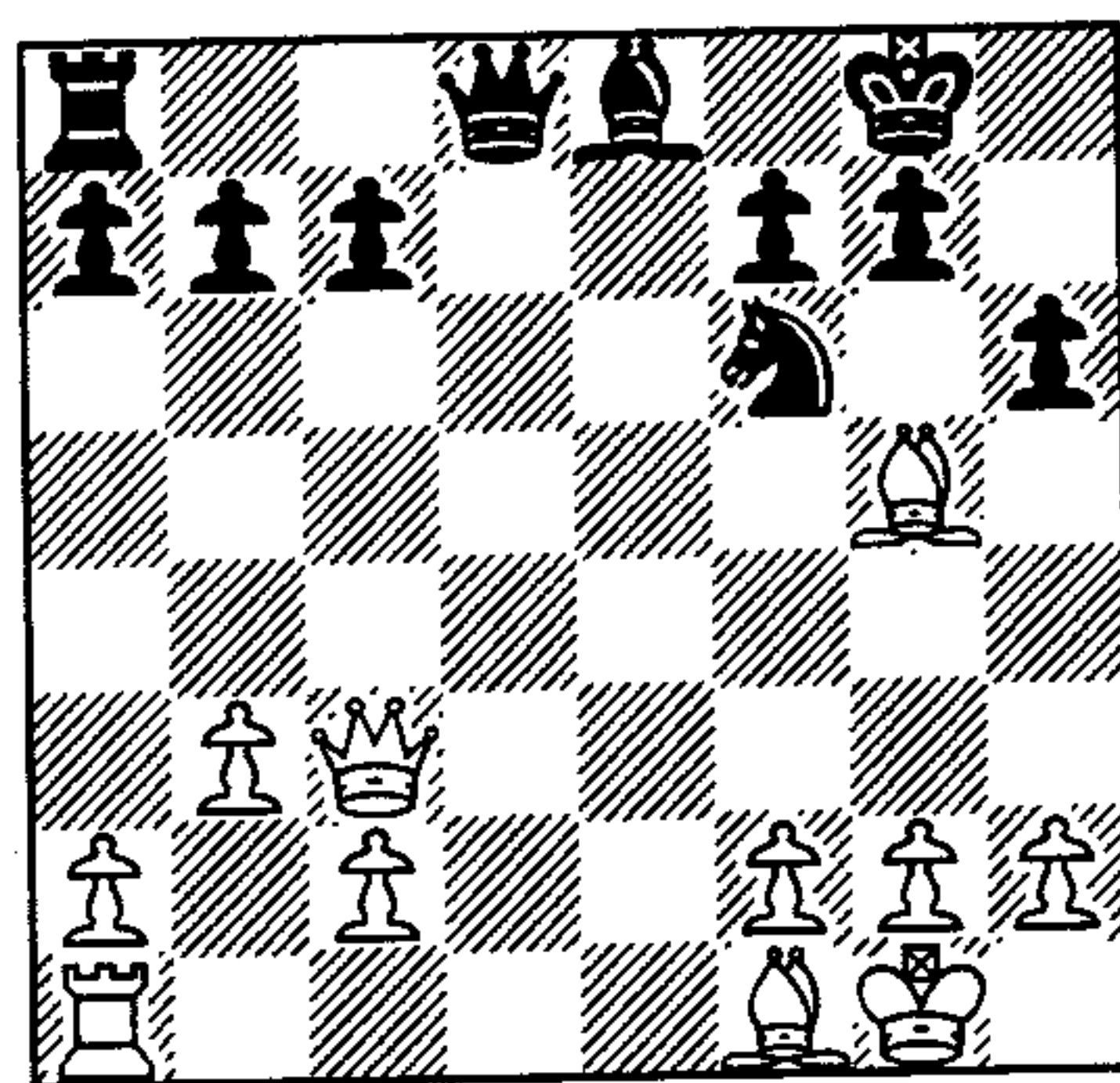
The strength of White's concept has been illustrated and the rest is just another game of chess.

19...♙c6 20 ♖g2 ♘8d7 21 g5 ♘xe5 22 ♙xe5 ♘e4 23 ♙xe4 dxe4 24 h4 ♙h8! 25 f6 g6 26 h5 ♙g8 27 ♙f2 ♖a5! 28 ♙h1 ♖xc3 29 ♙ae1 ♙d7 30 hxg6 ♙xg6 31 ♖xe4 ♙g8 32 ♖xb7 ♖c2+ 33 ♙e2 ♖f5+ 34 ♙f4 ♙c8 35 ♖f3 c3 36 e4 ♖a5 37 d5 c2 38 e5 ♙c3 39 ♖h5??

39 ♖e4 wins.

39...h6 40 e6 ♙e8 41 ♙c1 ♖xd5 42 e7 ♙xg5! 43 ♙xg5 ♖f5+ 44 ♙e1 c1♖+ 45 ♙xc1 ♙xc1+ 46 ♙d2 ♙c2+ 47 ♙d1 ♖d3+ 48 ♙e1 ♖g3+ 49 ♙d1 ♖d3+ 50 ♙e1 ♖c3+ 51 ♙f2 ♖d4+ 0-1

Exercise 52: White to move
Ivanchuk-Short
Novgorod 1994



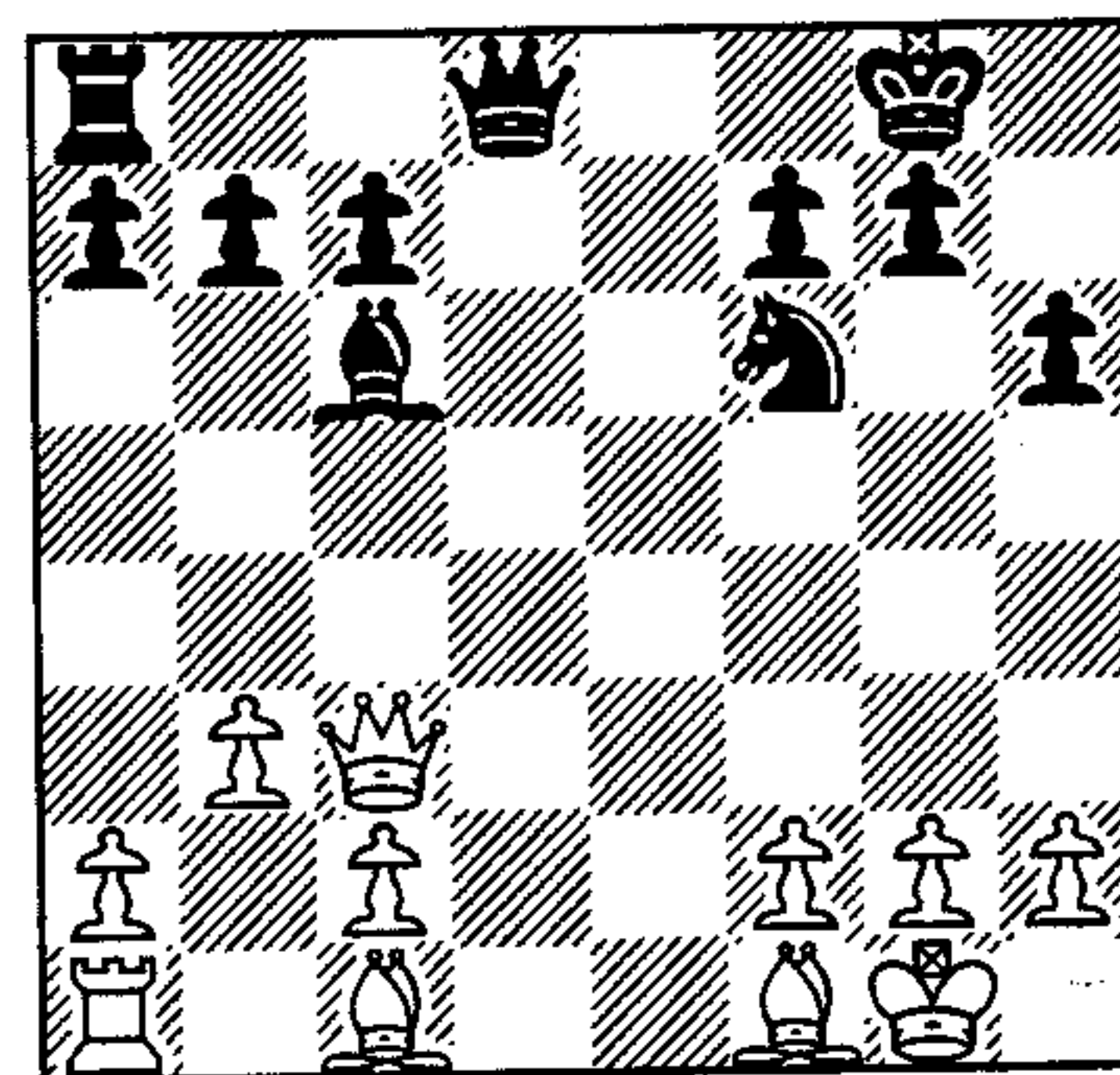
White needs to make a choice. If he plays 18 ♙xf6 he has no advantage at all as the resulting weak pawns cannot be attacked. In the event of 18 ♙h4 there

comes 18...♙c6 followed by ...g7-g5 and ...♘e4, also with equality. Therefore there is only one good move.

18 ♙c1!

White is not trying to prove anything in particular but simply posts his bishop on the most natural square, b2, retaining some advantage due to the bishop pair. As Black also is not fully developed the loss of time is by no means critical.

18...♙c6



19 ♙b2

The pressure on the long diagonal will force Black either to weaken his kingside with ...f7-f6 or make him feel quite uncomfortable. All endgames also give White good winning chances.

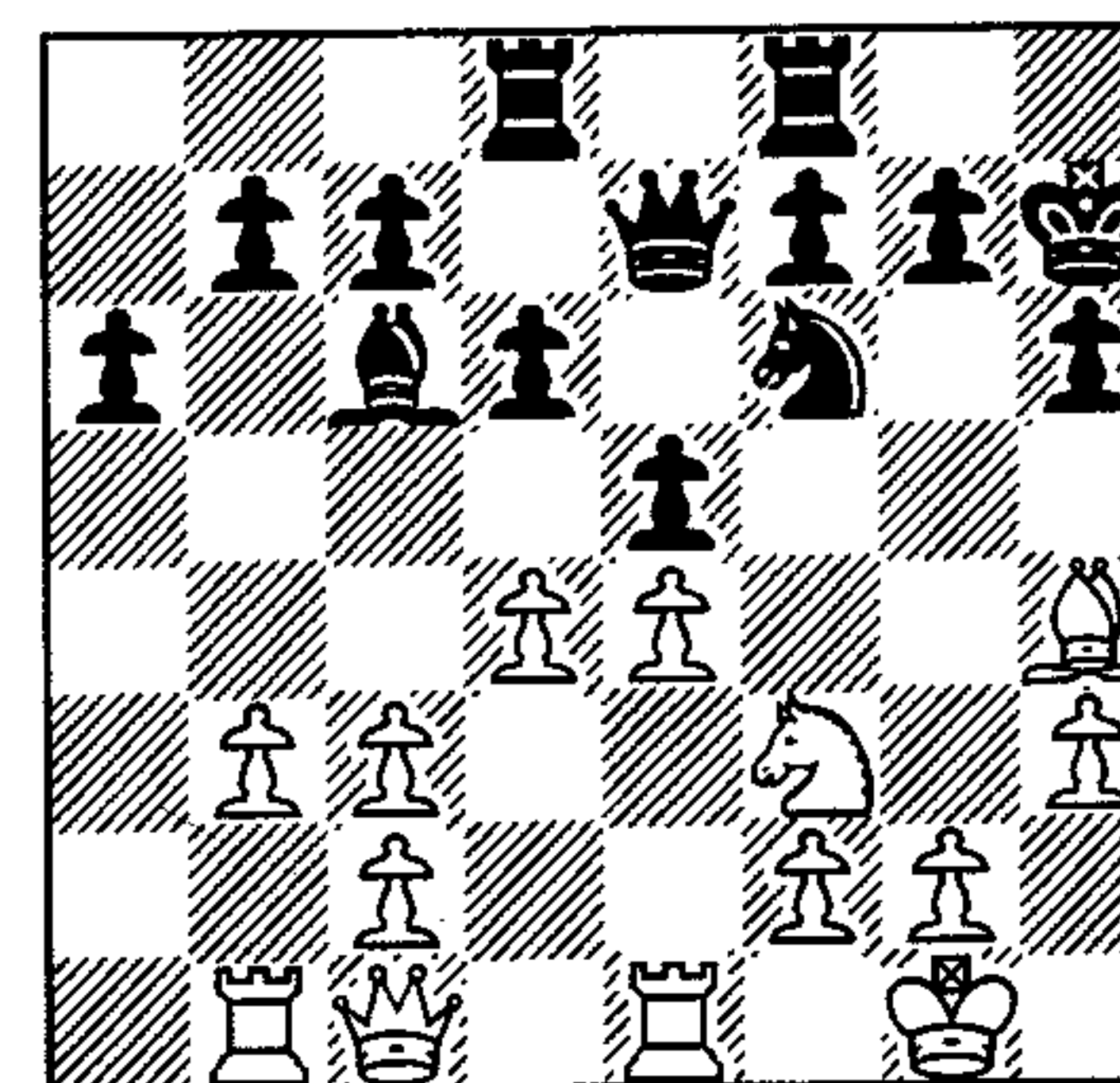
19...♖d6 20 ♙e1 ♙e8 21 ♙xe8+ ♘xe8 22 f3 a6 23 a4 ♘f6 24 ♙d3 ♖f4?

24...♙d5, with advantage to White, is better. Now White gets a winning position.

25 ♙xa6! bxa6 26 ♖xc6 ♖d2 27 h3 ♖e3+ 28 ♙f1 ♖d2 29 ♙xf6 gxf6 30 ♖xc7 h5 31 h4 ♖d1+ 32 ♙f2 ♖d2+ 33 ♙g3 ♖e1+ 34 ♙h3 ♖h1+ 35 ♖h2 ♖d1 36 ♖g3+ ♙h7 37 ♖f4 ♙g7 38 ♖e4 a5 39 c4?? ♖xb3 40 c5 ♖c3! 41 ♖d5 ♖a1 42 ♖c4 ♖b1

43 ♙g3 ♖e1+ 44 ♙h2 ♖e5+ 45 ♙h3 ♖f5+ 46 ♙g3 ♖e5+ 47 ♙f2 ♖b2+ 48 ♙e3 ♖xg2 49 c6 ♖g1+ 50 ♙e4 ♖e1+ 51 ♙d4 ♖e5+ 52 ♙d3 ♖f5+ 53 ♙d2 ♖xf3 54 c7 ♖f2+ 55 ♙d3 ♖g3+ 56 ♙e4 ♖g4+ 57 ♙d3 ♖g3+ 58 ♙c2 ♖f2+ 59 ♙b3 ♖b6+ 60 ♙a2 ♖f2+ 61 ♙a3 ♖e3+ 62 ♙b2 ♖b6+ ½-½

Exercise 53: White to move
Short-Speelman
London 1991



The weakest point in Black's camp is the e5-pawn. The worst placed white piece is the rook on b1. The ideal square for this piece is on a5. Therefore the correct move is logical.

18 ♙a1!

Playing with all the pieces – always remember to do that!

18...♙g8

Better was 18...♙a8!? with the same line as in the game, only now Black does not lose the a6-pawn. White would probably play 19 c4 with some advantage. Black has parried White's idea, but White has improved his rook and Black has worsened his.

19 dxe5 dxe5 20 ♙a5

Now White is doing well.

20...♙b5 21 c4 b6 22 ♙a1 ♙c6 23 ♙xa6 g5 24 ♙g3 ♘h5!

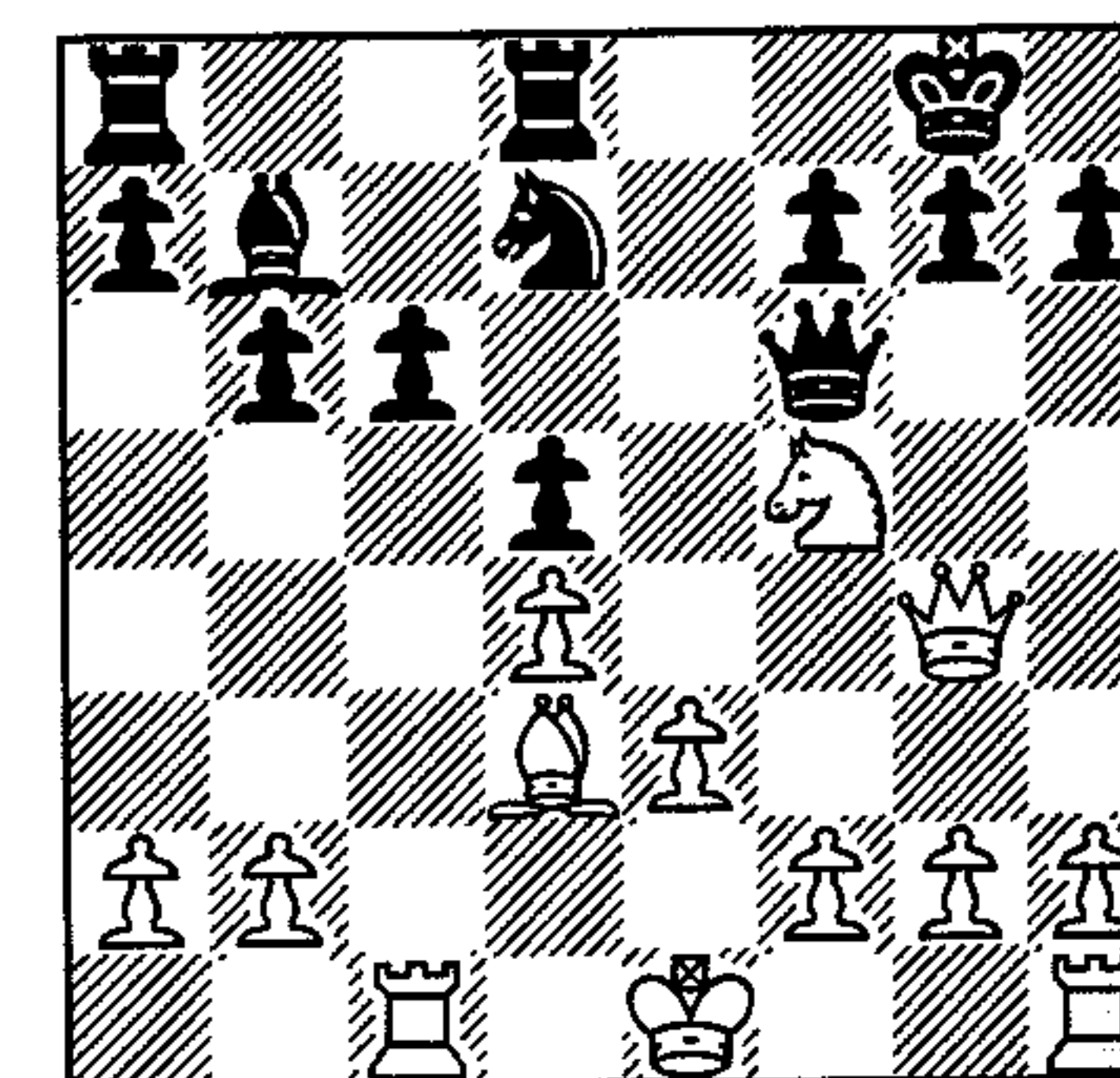
24...♘d7 25 ♙a7 is uncomfortable. 25 ♘xe5

25 ♙xe5? g4 and the king is exposed. 25...♙b7 26 ♙a7 ♘xg3 27 ♙xb7 ♖xe5 28 fxc3 ♖xg3 29 ♖e3 ♖e5 30 c5!? b5?

30...g4 31 h4 b5 would have kept Black in the game. Now it is critical for him.

31 ♙f1 ♙d7 32 ♙xb5 c6 33 ♙b6 ♙g6 34 b4 ♙g7 35 ♖f3 h5 36 ♖xh5 ♖d4+ 37 ♙h1 g4 38 ♙b8 ♙d8 39 ♙b7 ♖f6!? 40 ♙xf7+ ♖xf7 41 ♙xf7+ ♙xf7 42 hxg4 ♙e8 43 ♖h7+ ♙f6 44 ♖d7 ♙e6 45 b5 ♙e5 46 b6 ♙g8 47 c3 1-0

Exercise 54: White to move
Vaganian-Short
Debrecen 1992



How should White, to move, complete his development?

Here White could develop normally with 15 0-0 but this does not lead to any particular advantage. The strongest way to develop an initiative is by bringing the king's rook into play via the 3rd

rank. As ♔e1-f1 will work as well as castling, White has no problems with the king. How should one find this plan? Well, very simple. White is slightly better placed and is reasonably active, while Black is passive. Therefore White should attempt to prove an advantage, and this is done by finding the most serious weakness in the enemy camp. In this case it is the kingside. After...

15 h4!

...White is trying to establish four pieces against two on the kingside. This is the most dangerous approach. 15 ♖a6 is a tricky line, when Black must make a choice:

a) 15...♙xa6 16 ♖xc6 ♘e5? (16...h5 17 ♗f4! g5? 18 ♗f3 wins for White – Short – but 17...♘c5! transposes to 15...h5) 17 dxe5 ♗xe5 leads to an unclear game according to Short. I believe White has nothing to fear here, as after 18 ♘h6+! ♙f8 19 ♗b4+ ♙e8! (19...♗e7 20 ♗xe7+ ♙xe7 21 ♘f5+ ♙f8 22 ♘d4 gives White a clear advantage) 20 ♗a4 ♙f8 21 ♗a3+! ♙e8 22 ♗xa6 gxh6 23 0-0 White holds the advantage.

b) 15...h5! was found by a clever student, Jan Hondenbrink. This leads to a draw after 16 ♗f4 ♙xa6! 17 ♖xc6 ♘c5 18 dxc5 ♗xb2, when White has nothing better than 19 ♘e7+ ♙f8 20 ♘g6+ ♙g8 21 ♘e7+ with a perpetual.

15...♘f8 16 ♗g5!

The key move. 16 ♖h3 ♙c8 17 ♖f3 ♙xf5 allows Black to eliminate the primary attacker and thereby equalise.

16...♗xg5 17 hxg5

This position is structurally better for White. The knight on f5 is great and Black has weaknesses on h7 and c6, as well as some other weak squares. That

Black won tells us something about his greatness.

17...♖d7 18 f4 ♖ad8 19 ♙d2 ♖c7 20 b4 ♘e6 21 ♖h4 c5 22 ♖ch1 h6 23 bxc5 bxc5 24 ♘xh6+ gxh6 25 ♖xh6 ♘f8 26 f5 f6 27 ♖xf6! c4 28 ♙c2 c3+ 29 ♙e2 ♖g7 30 g6 ♖c7 31 g4 ♙c6 32 g5 ♖b8 33 ♙f3 ♖cc8 34 ♙b3?

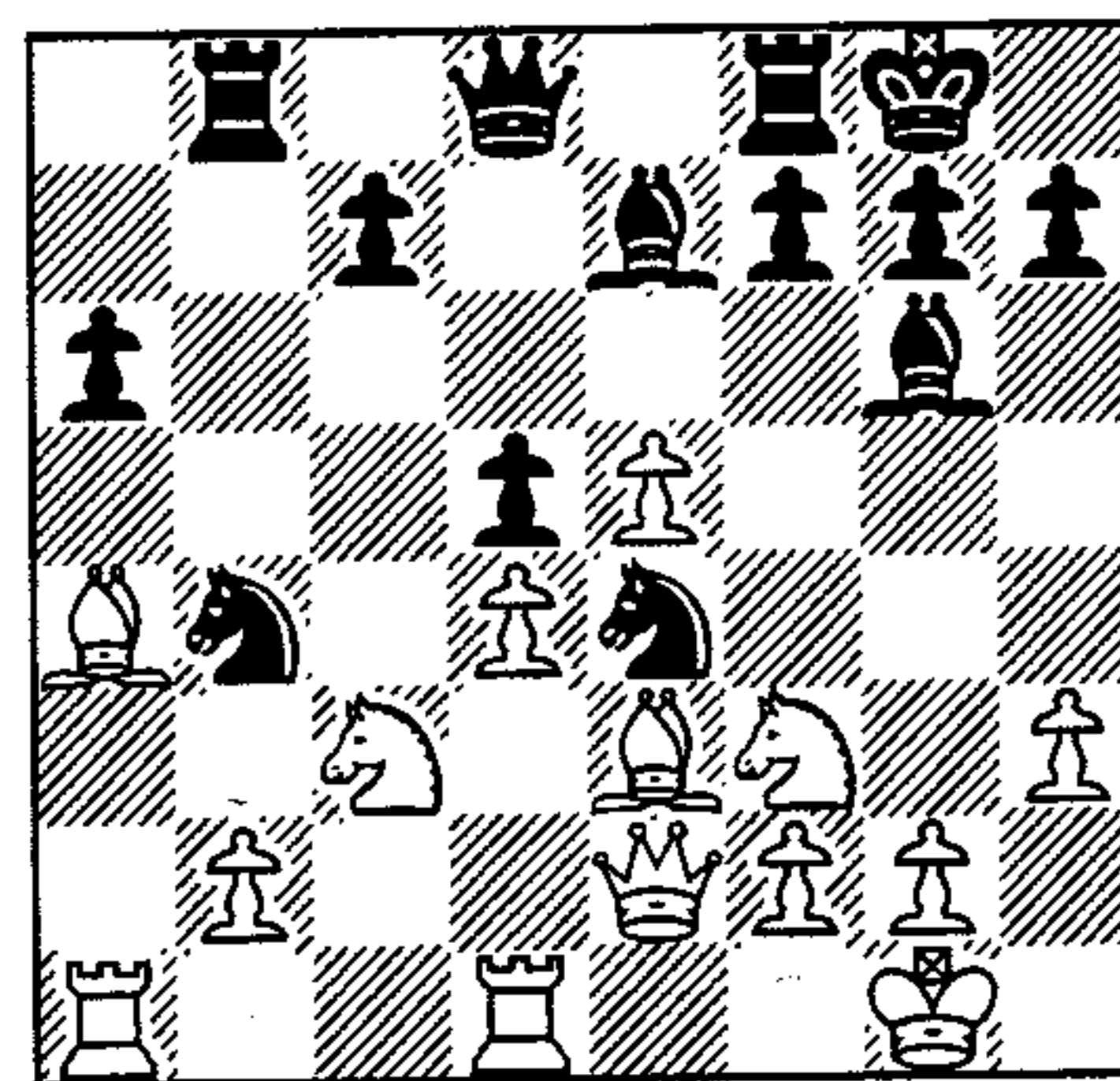
34 ♖xf8+! ♖xf8 35 f6 ♖b7 36 ♙f5 ♙d7 37 g7 and wins.

34...♖xb3! 35 axb3 ♙b5 36 e4?! c2 37 ♖c1 ♖c3+ 38 ♙f4 dxe4 39 ♖f7 e3 40 ♖b7 a6 41 ♖b8?! ♙d3! 42 d5 ♖c5 43 ♙e5 ♖b5! 44 ♖d8?

44 ♖xb5! axb5 45 ♙d4 ♙xf5 46 ♙xe3 ♘d7 47 ♙d2 ♘c5 48 ♖xc2 ♘xb3+ 49 ♙c3 ♙xc2 50 ♙xc2 ♘d4+ 51 ♙c3 ♘f5 52 ♙b4 ♘d6 53 ♙c5 draws – Short.

44...♖xb3! 45 ♖h1 ♖b6! 46 ♖c8 e2 47 f6 ♙xg6 48 ♖c7 e1♗+ 49 ♖xe1 ♖b1 50 ♖e3 c1♗ 51 ♖xc1 ♖xc1 52 ♖a3 ♖g1 53 ♖xa6 ♖xg5+ 54 ♙d4 ♙f7 0-1

Exercise 55: White to move
Short-Karpov
Linares 1992



Here we are concerned with identify-

ing weaknesses. White has only one weakness – the b2-pawn – while Black suffers from having some rather weak pawns and one weak square: a6, c6 and d5. The defender of all these squares is the knight on b4 which, consequently, keeps Black's position intact. Therefore Short came up with a brilliant idea.

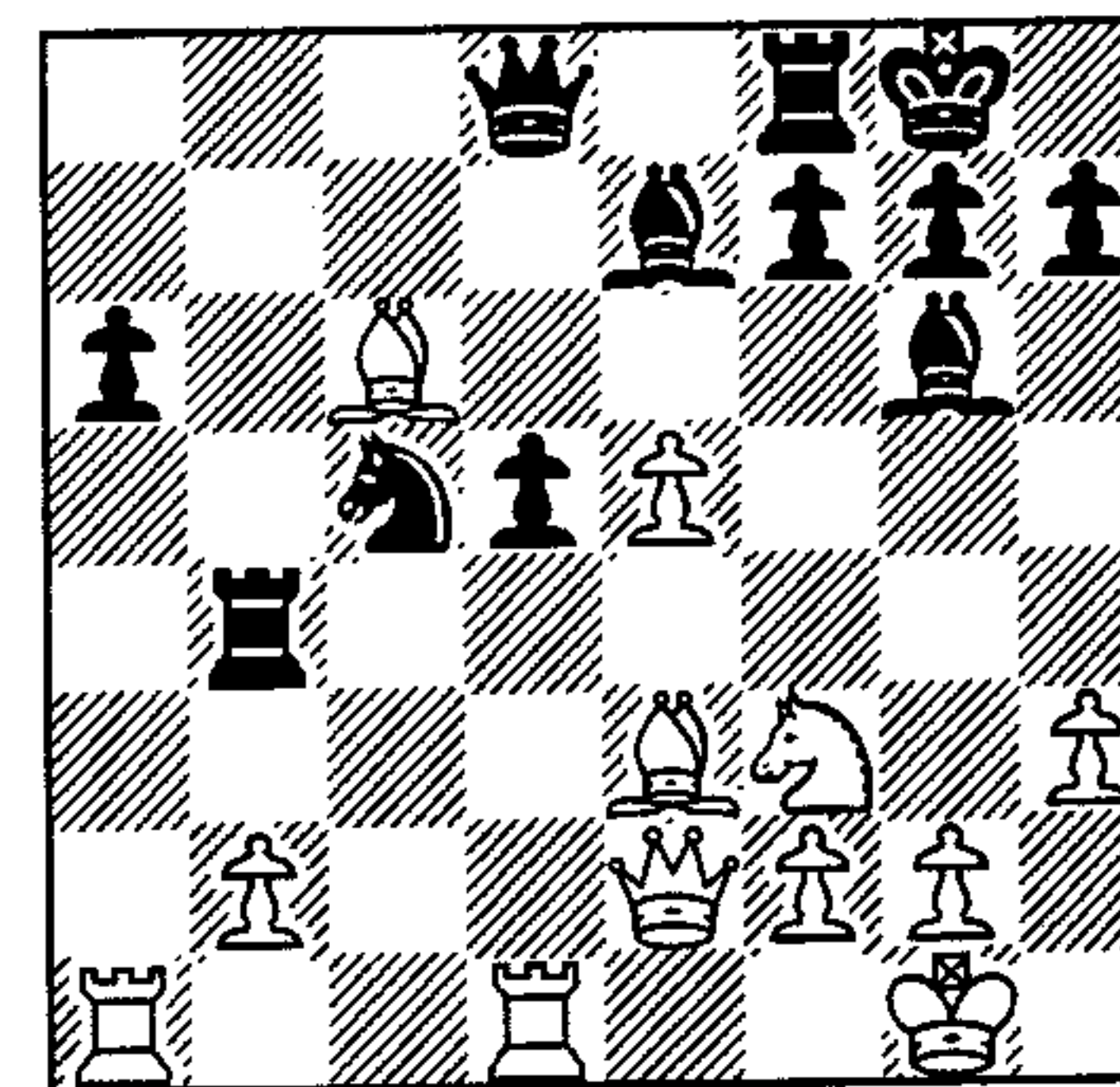
18 ♘a2!

Simply eliminating the prime defender. After this Black is in trouble. The knight on e4 is not as well placed as the one on b4, despite its appearance.

18...c5

Karpov tries an active defence, but Black cannot save this position even with perfect play.

19 dxc5 ♘xc5 20 ♘xb4 ♖xb4 21 ♙c6

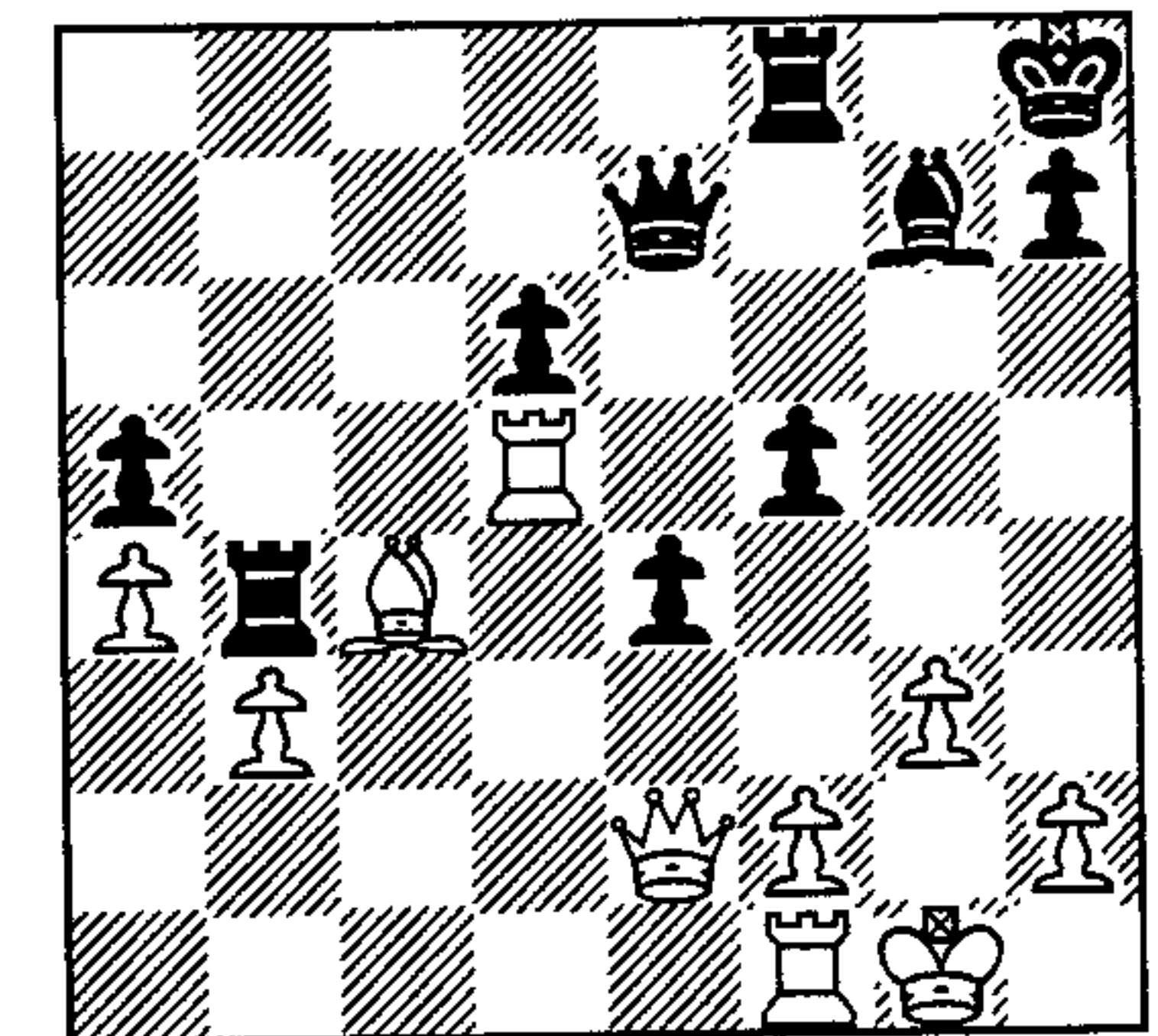


21...♗b6

Black also loses after 21...♙e4 22 ♘d4 (with the plan 23 f3) 22...♗b8 23 ♙xd5 ♙xd5 24 ♘f5 ♗xe5 25 ♖xd5! etc.

22 ♙xd5 ♖xb2 23 ♗c4 ♖c2 24 ♗g4 ♗c7 25 ♘d4 ♖c3 26 ♘c6 ♖e8 27 ♙d4 ♖c2 28 ♘b4! ♖d8 29 ♘xc2 ♙xc2 30 e6 ♙f8 31 exf7+ ♙h8 32 ♖e1 ♙g6 33 ♖e8 ♖xe8 34 fxe8 ♗xe8 35 ♙xc5 ♙xc5 36 ♗e6 1-0

Exercise 56: White to move
Short-Kramnik
Novgorod 1995



This is a very difficult exercise. It is also very instructive because it tells us something about winning positions, or at least gives me the chance to say something about winning positions. The most important rule in winning positions (here I am talking about statically winning positions, where the structure or the material makes it winning) is that if nothing happens, then you win. This is simple logic. So what should you do? *Prevent all counterplay* – if possible. Another rule is that the presence of opposite coloured bishops makes it easier to win once the position is genuinely winning, as Bent Larsen explained. In our case this means that White already has the ideal situation. All he has to do is prevent counterplay, and Black has counterplay only connected to the advance of the f-pawn, so the right move would have been 26 f4!, fixing the pawn and taking the e5-square away from Black's bishop. Instead Short played carelessly.

26 ♖fd1?!

26 ♖xa5 is also an acceptable move,

as after 26...f4 27 gxf4 ♖xf4 28 ♖a8+ White will probably win anyway. Nevertheless it is inexact. And in a winning position it is precision that is of the highest importance as this prevents situations occurring in which you have to play good moves to earn your full point – something that might fail, as millions of players have experienced over the years...

Instead, 26 f4! ♖c7 27 ♖fd1 ♖f6 28 ♖h5 with a clear win is the line Short prefers, and he is right in doing so. Black has no counterplay and the opposite coloured bishops are not a drawing factor, as Black's is not playing. Moreover this feature accentuates White's advantage by increasing the threats to the black king.

26...♗e5 27 ♖xa5 ♖b7 28 ♖ad5?! ♖f6 29 f4 exf3 30 ♖xf3 ♖g7 31 ♗h1 ♖h6

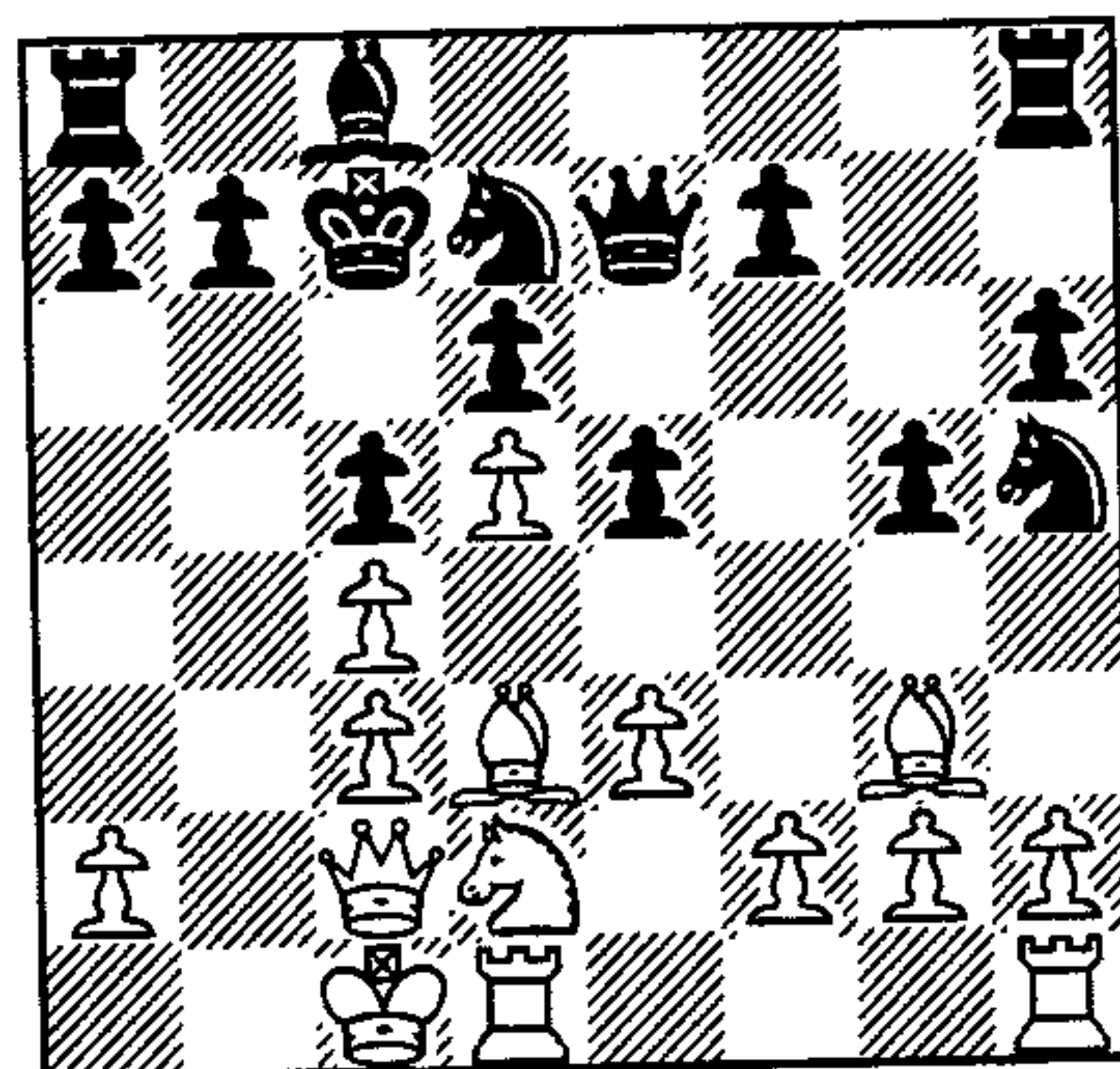
White is probably still winning, but there are different kinds of winning positions. There are those you will win with optimal play, those you will win most of the time and there are positions where you will always win. This example does not fall in the latter category, which it would have done after 26 f4!, of course. For practical results, this is a very important lesson.

32 ♖g1 ♖g6 33 ♖d3 ♖g5 34 a5 ♖h5 35 ♖f2 f4 36 g4 ♖h3 37 ♖f3 ♖xf3 38 ♖xf3 ♗d4 39 ♖d1 ♗e3 40 a6 ♖f6 41 ♖d5 f3 42 ♖xd6 ♖g7 43 ♗d5?! ♗a7! 44 ♖b4?! f2 45 ♗g2 ♖e8 46 ♖f1 ♖e5 47 ♗c6! ♖e7 48 ♖d2 ♗g7 49 b4 ♖f7 50 b5 ♗b6 51 ♖d5 ♖f4 52 ♖e4 ♖d6 53 ♗d5 ♖e7?

53...♖f4 would have given Black rea-

sonable chances of a successful defence. 54 ♖f5 ♗c7?? 55 ♖g5+ 1-0

Exercise 57: White to move
Yusupov-Short
Novgorod 1995



Yusupov, quite understandably, had some problems finding a plan in this position. Indeed it is by no means easy. However, with the aid of logic one should be able to find the right move, though it does not lead to an overwhelming advantage. It is clear that White should try to exploit the weakness of the f5-square in some way as it is not easy to prevent Black's main plan of ...♗b6, ...♗d7 and ...♗a4 followed by ...a7-a6 and ...b7-b5, opening the queenside. If Black takes on g3 then after 16 fxc3 White has good control down the f-file and good control over the strongholds e4 and f5.

The other idea is to open the centre in some way that utilises the two bishops. The move for this is f2-f4, but this does not work if Black can just take on g3, as the extra power on the dark squares then fades away. This, apparently, did not help Yusupov find the appropriate plan, although he thought

about pushing the f-pawn. The thing is that after 15 f3 Black does not necessarily take on g3 because the bishop would not be a major threat on f2. Here pattern recognition and knowledge of these kinds of Nimzo/Queen's Indian positions comes in handy. It is often seen that White chooses to recapture with the f-pawn on g3 in order to use the f-file. True, then the rook is often already on f1, but still it is an idea worth remembering.

Therefore the right move is 15 h3!, intending 15...♗b6 16 ♗h2! and ♖fd1, with g2-g4 and f2-f4 on the way, when White has achieved something on the dark squares.

15 ♖de1?!

With the idea of f2-f4 but, apparently, Yusupov was unable to make this work.

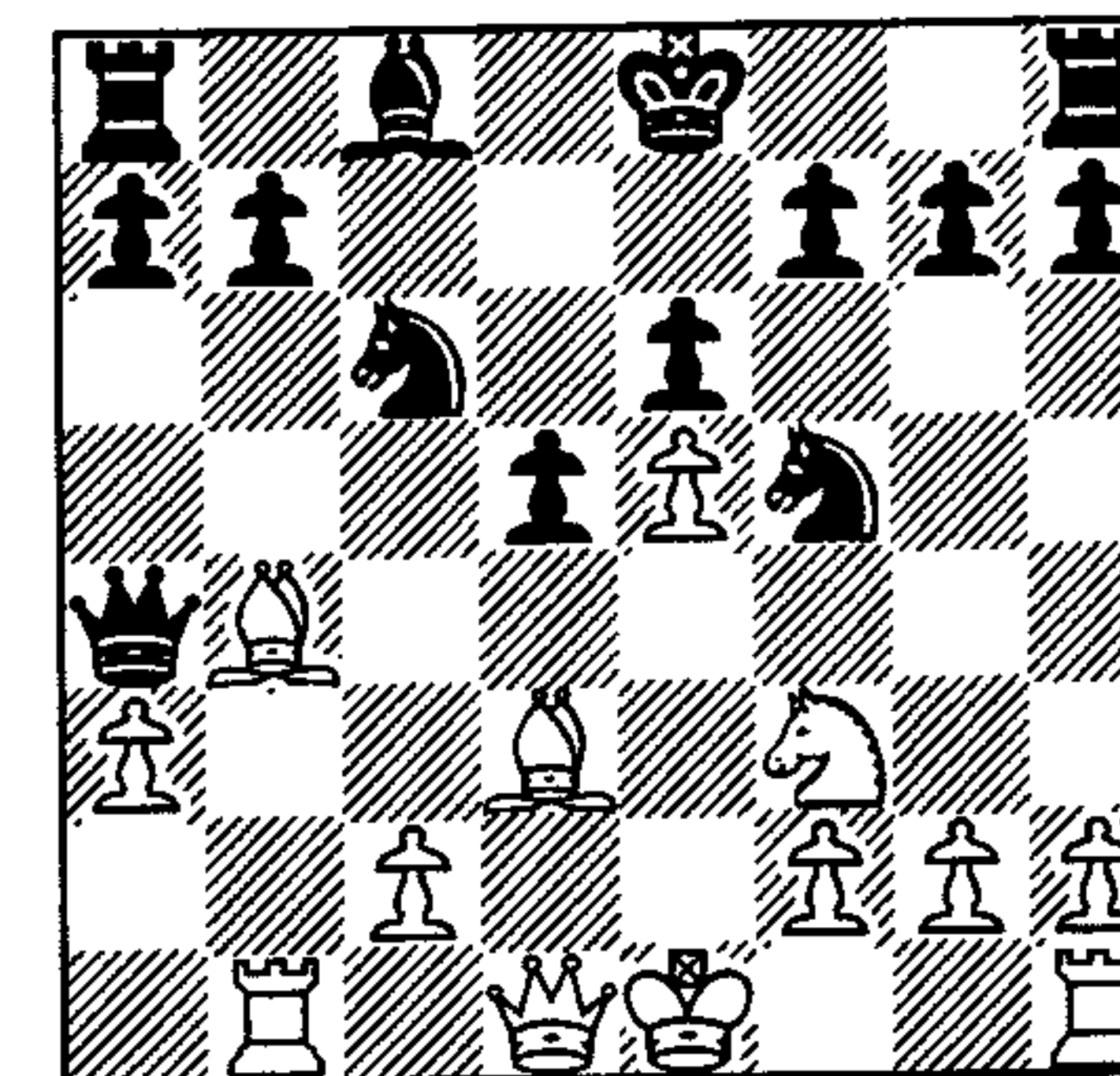
15...♗df6 16 f3?!

16 f4 ♗xc3 17 hxc3 ♗d7 with the idea of ...♖ae8 is slightly better for Black according to Short. 16 h3! was still the best move. Now Black has equalised.

16...♗xc3 17 hxc3 ♗d7 18 ♖h2 h5 19 ♗b1 g4 20 ♗a1 ♖hg8 21 f4 h4!? 22 ♖xh4 exf4 23 gxf4 ♗xd5 24 ♖hh1 ♗b6 25 e4 ♖h8 26 ♖hf1 ♖h2 27 ♗b3 ♖ah8 28 e5 ♗c6 29 ♗e4 ♗xc4 30 ♗xc6 bxc6 31 exd6+ ♖xd6 32 ♖f5? ♖d5 33 ♖e7+ ♗b6 34 ♖xd5 cxd5 35 ♖xf7 ♖h1 36 ♖b1 ♖xb1+ 37 ♗xb1 ♖h1+ 38 ♗c2 ♖h2 39 ♖f6+ ♗c7 40 ♗xc5 ♖xg2+ 41 ♗d1 g3? 42 ♖g6 ♖d2+ 43 ♗e1 g2 44 ♗e6+! ♗d7 45 ♗d4 ♖xa2 46 ♗e2 a5 47 ♖xg2 a4 48 ♖g7+ ♗d6 49 ♖g6+ ♗e7 50 ♖a6 a3 51 ♗d4? ♖b2 52 ♗c6+ ♗f7 53 ♗b4 d4 54

♖c6 ♗d2 55 ♖a6 ♗b1! 56 ♗d5 ♗xc3 57 ♖a7+ ♗e6 58 ♗c7+ ♗d6 59 ♗e8+ ♗c6 60 ♖a6+ ♗b7 0-1

Exercise 58: White to move
Timman-Hübner
Tilburg 1988



This exercise is about squares and those moves that we know are inevitable. Sometimes we can grow much wiser by just pointing out which developments we know are bound to come. Here ...♗xb4 is coming, to which ♖xb4 is the most comfortable answer, but then there is a problem with ...♖xa3. Then after ♗xf5 exf5, ♗d4 the f5-pawn comes under fire and, in turn, g7 might be a weakness, not forgetting that we will be left with knight against bishop. This means that White will have the advantage on the dark squares while Black will have more influence on the light squares. Consequently White's queen will be best placed on the dark squares, so the ideal square – which has yet to be found – is f4.

14 ♖c1!

This move is in tune with all these considerations and, in my opinion, clearly the strongest of all the possible

Excelling at Positional Chess

continuations. However, the others should still be investigated:

a) 14 0-0 ♖xb4 15 ♜xb4 (15 axb4 is probably better, but this is not the way we want to play) 15...♗xa3 16 ♔b5+ ♕f8 and losing the right to castle does not seem to justify the sacrifice of two pawns.

b) 14 ♔xf5 ♖xb4! (14...exf5 15 0-0 ♖xb4 16 ♜xb4 ♗xa3 17 ♗d4 is good for White) 15 axb4 (15 ♜xb4 ♗xa3 16 ♜g4 exf5 17 ♜xg7 ♕f8 18 ♜g5 ♗b4+ looks good for Black; White needs to castle) 15...exf5 16 ♗xd5 ♗xc2 17 0-0 0-0 18 ♜fd1 ♗e4 and it is hard to imagine that White should have more than just enough compensation for the pawn here.

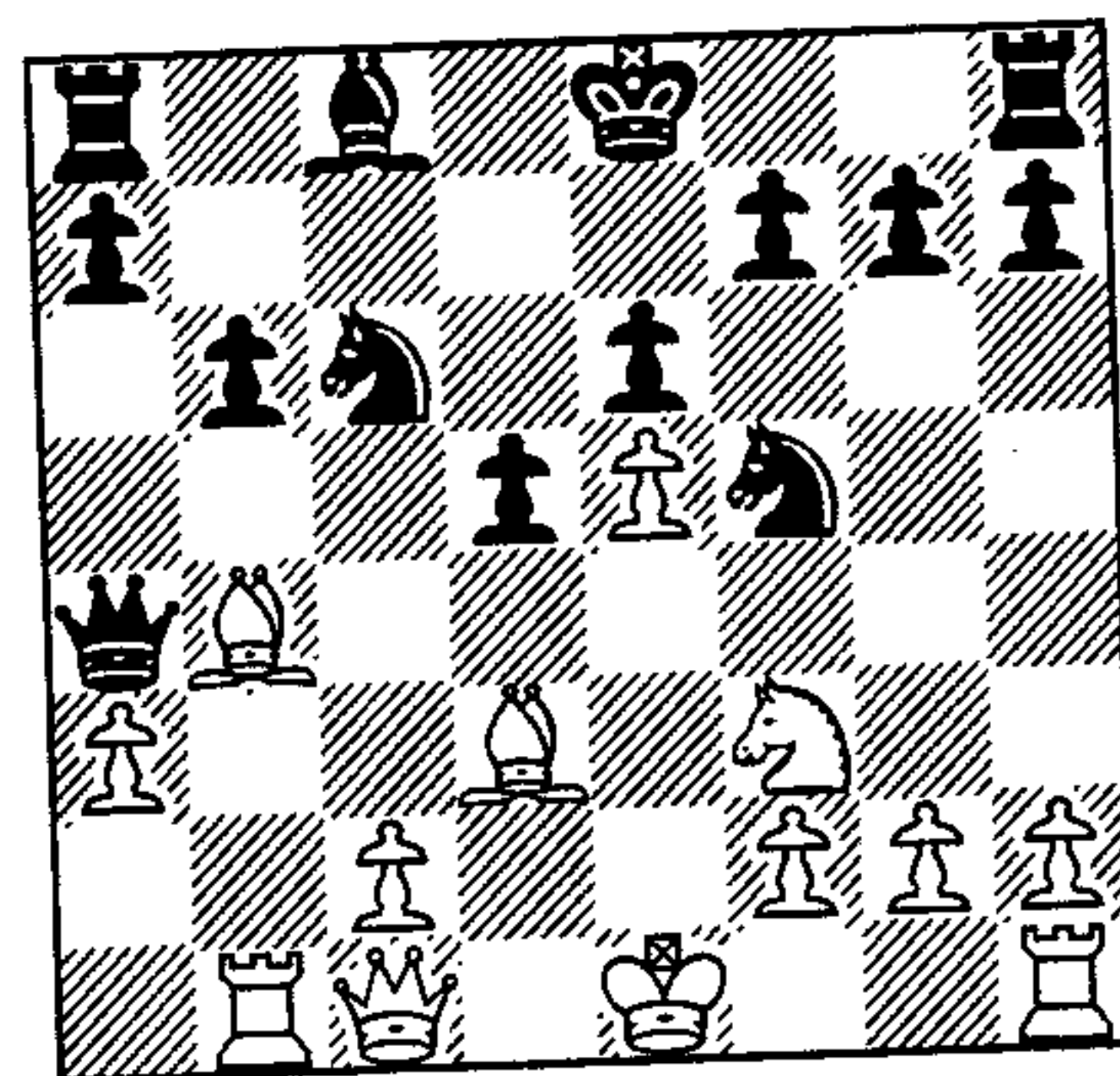
c) 14 g4? falls for the tactical trick 14...a5! when, although the position remains unclear after 15 ♔c5 ♗xg4 16 ♜g1 ♗f4, it does not give the impression that White has in any way benefited from these developments. Actually I prefer Black.

d) 14 h3, to prepare g2-g4, seems slow and I am not even sure that pushing the g-pawn is in White's interest. After 14...♖xb4 15 axb4 ♔d7 16 g4 ♖e7 followed by ...♖g6 Black holds the balance – at least.

e) 14 ♗e2! is a move suggested by *Junior 7*. I do not like it as much as 14 ♗c1 because it does nothing on the dark squares. But it does make uncomfortable threats to the black queen and offers some chances of an advantage after 14...a6 15 0-0 ♖xb4 16 axb4 followed by b4-b5. Here 14...♖fd4 15 ♖xd4 ♖xd4 16 ♗g4 ♖xc2+ 17 ♔xc2 ♗xc2 18 0-0 ♗g6 19 ♗h4 f6 20 f4! looks extremely dangerous for Black.

Of course we have learned from *Fritz* to take such pawns, and we have also improved our defensive skills, but this still looks like it is too much for Black to survive. The weakness of the king does not even seem to be a dynamic, but rather a static advantage.

14...b6



15 c4!

Another advantage of 14 ♗c1, which did not have to be foreseen to make the decision, so I did not comment on it.

15...♖xb4

15...dxc4 16 ♗xc4 ♔b7 17 ♔xf5 exf5 18 e6 is terrible for Black.

16 ♜xb4 ♗c6 17 0-0 0-0

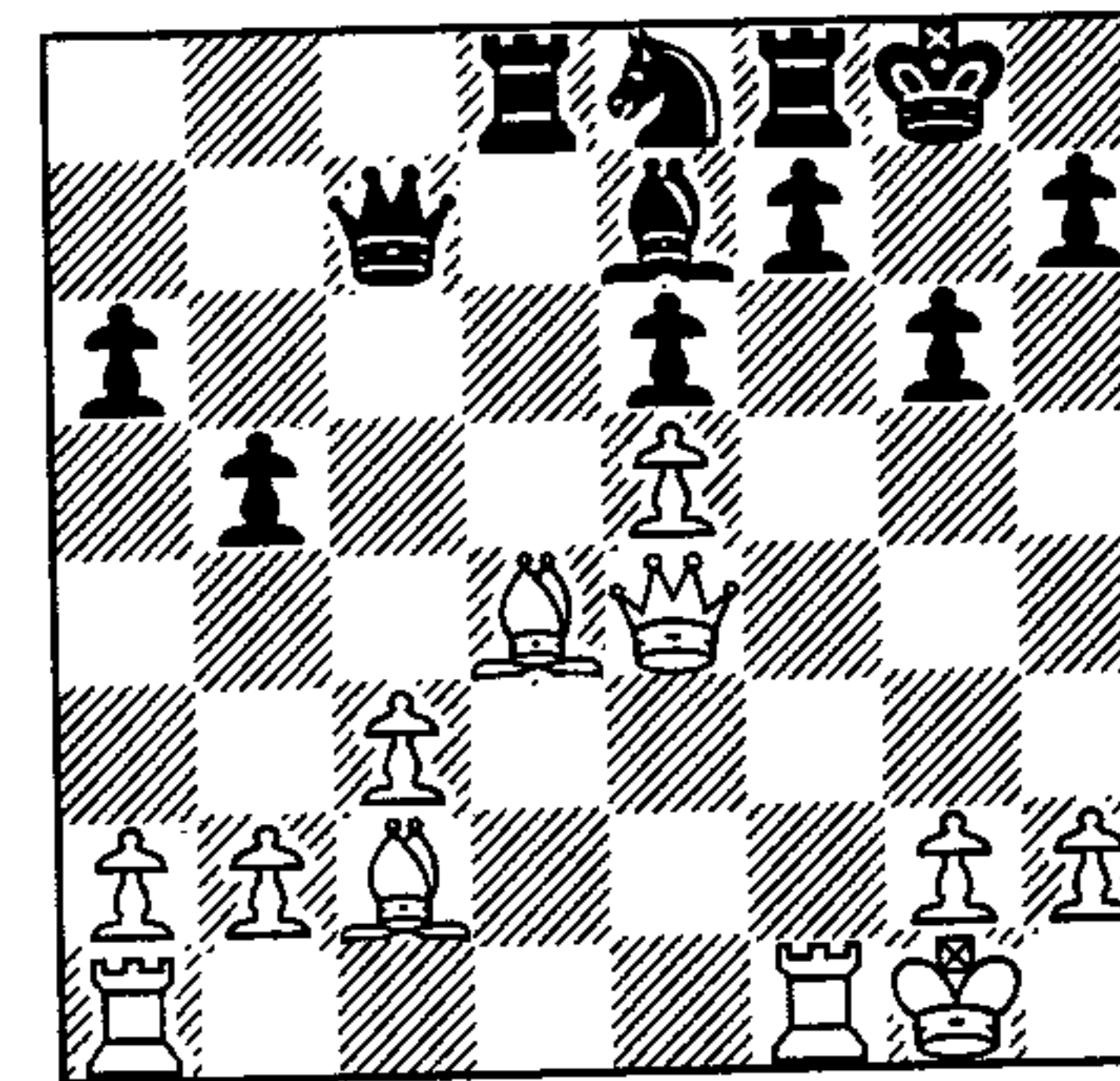
17...♔a6 18 ♔xf5 exf5 19 cxd5 ♗xd5 20 ♜d1 is a very uncomfortable position for Black.

18 ♗f4! ♔b7 19 ♔xf5 exf5 20 ♖d4 ♗c5?

20...♗c7! 21 cxd5 ♔xd5 22 ♖xf5 ♔e6 23 ♖d6 would have left White with only a minor edge, now it is all over.

21 ♖xf5 ♔c8 22 ♖xg7! ♕xg7 23 ♗g5+ ♕h8 24 ♗f6+ ♕g8 25 ♗g5+ ♕h8 26 ♗f6+ ♕g8 27 ♜b3 ♜e8 28 ♜g3+ ♕f8 29 ♜g7 ♜e7 30 e6! ♔xe6 31 ♜xh7 1-0

Exercise 59: White to move
Short-Kasparov
Amsterdam 1996



White has a clear static advantage. His isolated e5-pawn is a strength rather than a weakness as it controls key squares in the heart of Black's camp, denying access to the defender's pieces. Additionally White has more territory under his control as well as the advantage of the two bishops. Therefore the plan should be to prevent counterplay, improve the position to its maximum and then the winning combination should come about by itself.

So the first part of the plan is to prevent counterplay. The only way for Black to gain any is to eliminate the bishop on d4, hence White's next.

19 b4!

This is better than 19 ♗e3 because the queen is already fantastic on e4 and there is no need to be tied down to monitoring c5. One should also calculate 19...♜c8 20 b4 ♔xb4.

19...♖g7 20 g4!

Not to be allowed is ♖g7-f5xd4 etc. Now Black's counterplay has been nipped in the bud, leading us to the improvement phase.

20...h5 21 h3 a5 22 a3 ♜d7 23 ♜f3 ♗d8 24 ♜b1 ♔g5 25 ♜bf1 axb4 26 axb4 ♔e7 27 ♜b1??

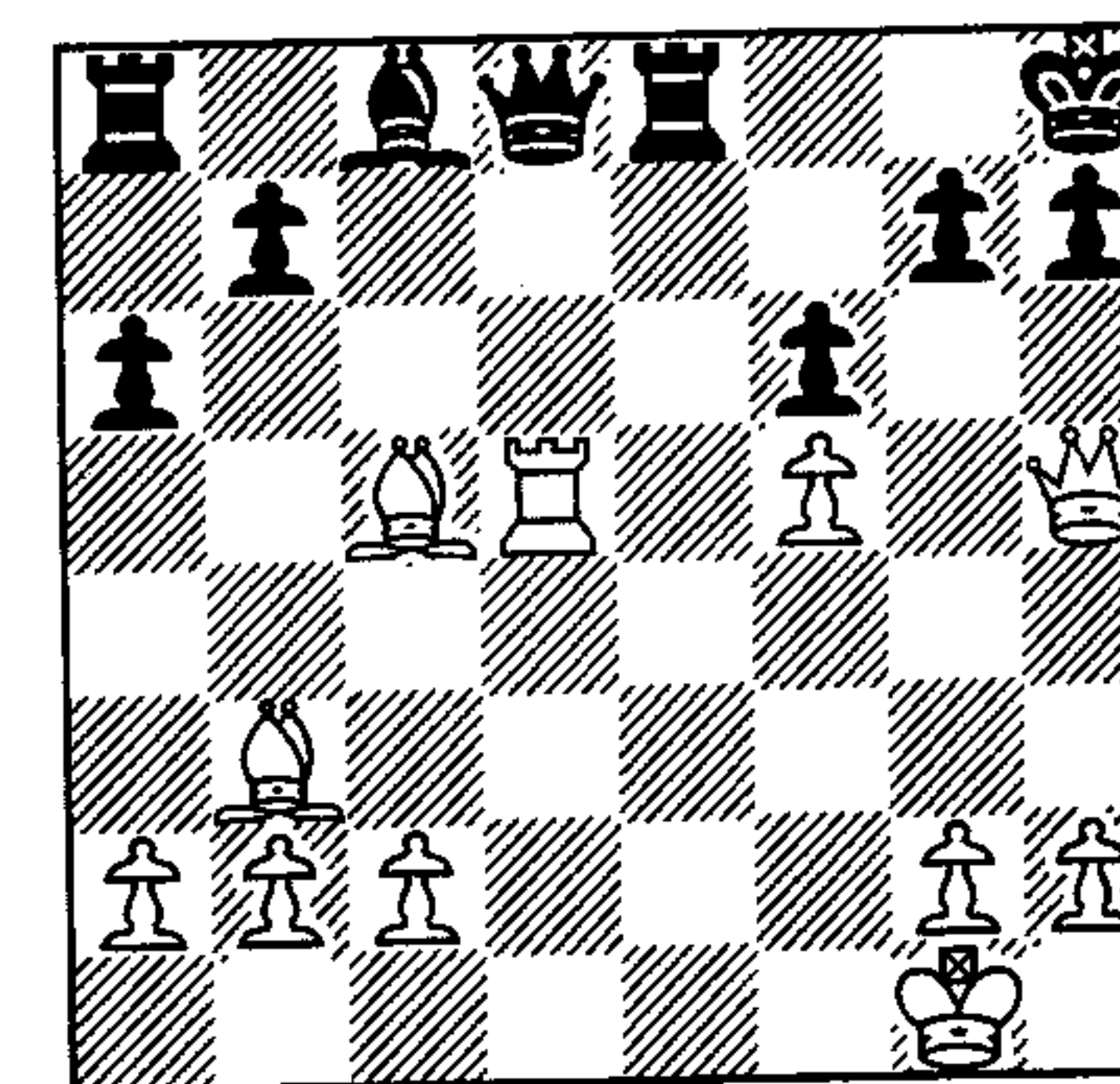
Now that White cannot further improve his position there should be an indication that direct action is appropriate. Whoops. White could have won with 27 gxf5 ♖xh5 28 ♜xf7! ♜xf7 29 ♜xf7 ♕xf7 30 ♗xg6+ ♕f8 31 ♗h6+ ♖g7 32 ♔g6! and mate will follow.

27...h4 28 ♗e3?! ♖e8 29 ♔e4 ♖c7 30 ♔c6 ♖d5 31 ♗e4??

White is still winning after 31 ♗f2 ♜c7 32 ♔xb5 ♗c8 33 ♜b3.

31...♖xc3!! 32 ♔xc3 ♗b6+ 33 ♕g2 ♜c7 34 ♔a8 ♜c4 35 ♗b7 ♗xb7 36 ♔xb7 ♜b8 37 ♔a6 ♜b6 38 ♜a1 ♜cc6 39 ♔xb5 ♜xb5 40 ♜a8+ ♕g7 41 ♜a7 ♕f8 42 ♜a8+ ♕g7 43 ♜a7 ♕f8 ½-½

Exercise 60: Black to move
Topalov-Short
Amsterdam 1996



Not so many choices here, but it is still very important to be exact.

This is a simple position where Black has only two moves that do not lose on the spot. It is a matter of simple calculation.

20...♙d7!

Now Black will have the better game. But after 20...♙e1+? 21 ♖f2 ♗e8 22 ♗xe8+ ♙xe8 23 ♙b6! he cannot develop his queenside, with a dreadful defensive task to look forward to.

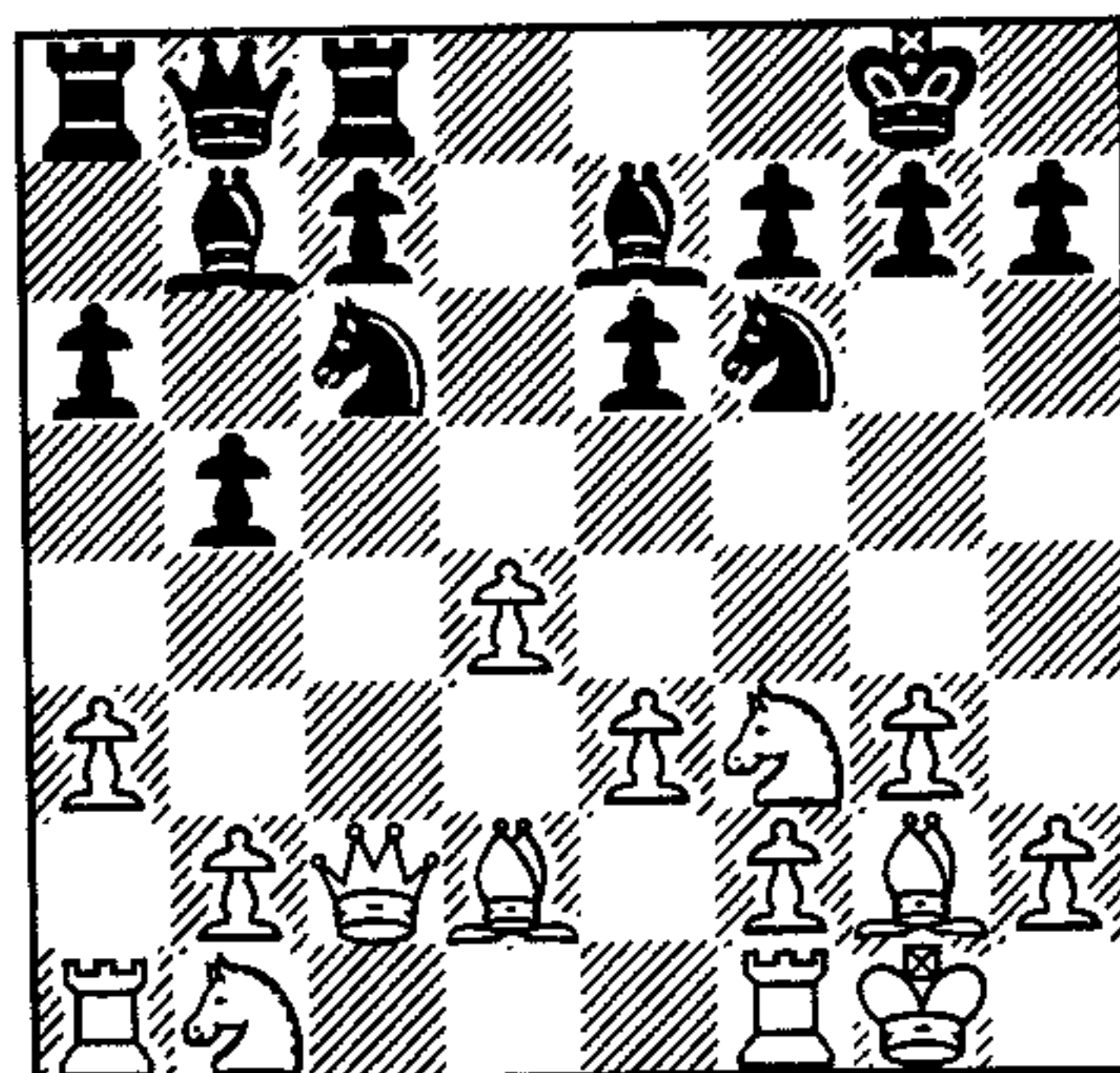
21 h3

Topalov sees that there is nothing. 21 ♙d3 h6! 22 ♙e6 ♗c7 and 21 ♗d1 ♗c8! are fine for Black, while 21 ♗f7 ♗a5! sees the mate on e1 come into play. These things are important in tactics (21...♙e1+ 22 ♖f2 and White wins). Then after 22 c3 ♙c6 23 ♙f8 ♗b6+ Black wins.

21...♙e5 22 ♙xe5 fxe5 23 ♙f7 ♙e8 24 ♙g6 h6 25 ♙xe8 ♗xe8 26 ♗xe8+ ♙xe8 27 ♙d6 ♙d8 28 ♙xe5 ♙d5 29 ♙c3 ♙xf5 30 ♙d4 b5 31 c3 h5 32 ♙f2 ♖g8 33 ♖f1 ♖f7 34 ♖e2 ♖e6 35 ♙d4 g6 36 ♙b6 ♖d5 37 ♙c7 ♖e4 38 ♙d8 ♙d5 39 ♙h4 ♙d3 40 ♙f2 a5 41 ♙e1 a4 42 ♙d2 ♙d7 43 ♙h6 ♙d5 44 ♙c1 ♙c5 45 ♙e3 a3! 46 ♙c1 b4! 0-1

The further ...b4-b3! is coming.

Exercise 61: White to move
Timman-Hjartarson
Amsterdam 1989



Another case of prophylaxis. The core of the position is whether or not Black will be allowed to play ...c7-c5. Timman comes up with a cunning idea to prevent this.

13 ♙e1!

Aiming at the potentially vulnerable piece on e7. The standard 13 ♙c3 ♙d8 leads to no advantage, as can be seen from the following: 14 b4 (14 e4 c5 15 ♙f4 ♗a7 16 dxc5 ♗xc5!?) is unclear according to Short) 14...a5 does not promise White an advantage:

a) 15 bxa5 ♙xa5 16 ♙fb1 (16 ♙d5? ♙xd5 17 ♙xa5 ♗a8 18 ♙b4 c5 and Black wins) 16...♗a8 17 ♗d1 c6? (an improvement is 17...♙c6!, with advantage to Black) 18 a4 and White was better in Kobalia-Kiriakov, Dubai 2002.

b) 15 ♗b2 axb4 16 axb4 ♙e4 17 ♙e5 ♙xc3 18 ♗xc3 ♙xg2 19 ♖xg2 ♙d6 20 ♙d3 ♗b7+ with equality in Chetverik-Ponomariov, Briansk 1995.

c) 15 ♙ab1 axb4 16 axb4 ♙c6 17 ♙a2 (17 ♙xb5 ♙a6 18 ♙h4 ♙d5! 19 ♙xd5 exd5 20 ♗xc6 ♙xb5 21 ♗xd5 ♙xh4 22 gxf4 ♙xf1 with advantage to Black – Short) 17...♙a6 18 ♙c1 ♗a8 19 ♗d1! ♙a3 20 ♙e1 e5! 21 ♙c2 (21 ♙xc6? ♙xc6 22 dxe5 ♙e4 favours Black) 21...♙a4 22 d5 (22 ♙xc6? ♙xc6 23 dxe5 ♙f3 24 ♗e1 ♙g4 and Black is better) 22...♙d8 23 e4 c6 24 dxc6 ♙xc6 with equality in Karpov-Short, Tilburg 1988.

13...a5

Now Black cannot play for the break with the c-pawn because opening the centre after 13...♙d8 14 e4 c5 15 d5! illustrates the problems of having packed all the pieces together on the queenside. After 15...exd5 16 exd5 ♗c7

(16...♙d6? 17 ♙c3! ♙xd5 18 ♙g5 g6 19 ♙e8+ ♙f8 20 ♙e5 ♗a7 21 ♙xh7 gives White a dangerous attack) 17 ♙c3 b4 18 ♙f4 ♗d7 19 ♙e5 ♗e8 20 ♙a4! it appears that White has clearly the better chances due to his freer play.

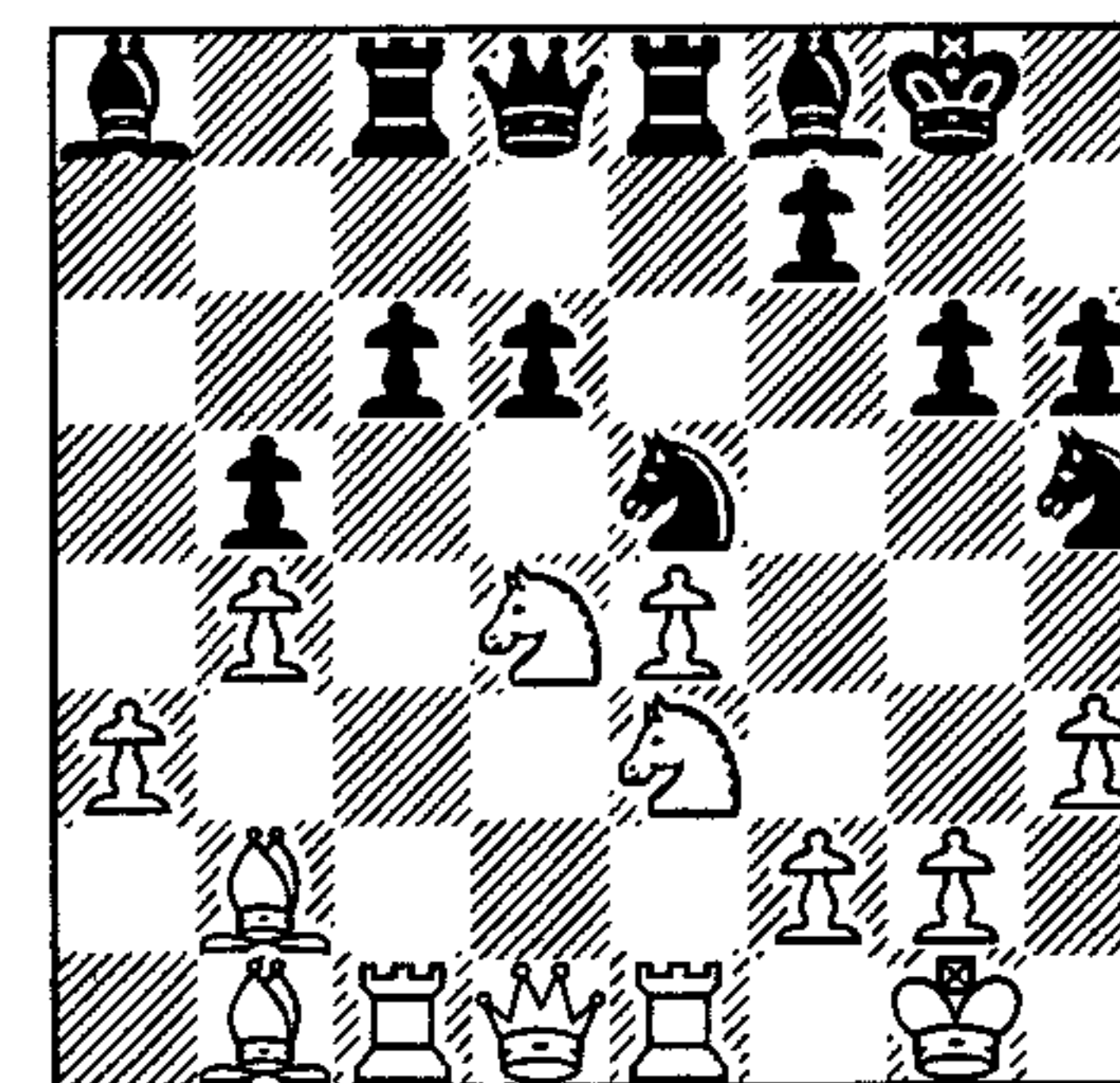
14 ♙c3 ♙d8 15 e4 b4 16 ♙a4 ♙d7 17 ♙f4 ♙d6 18 ♙e3 ♙c6 19 d5 b3 20 ♗c4 ♗b5 21 ♗xb5 ♙xb5 22 ♙c3 ♙d3 23 ♙d4! ♙c5 24 ♙ad1 ♙ab8 25 dxe6 fxe6 26 ♙h3 ♙c2?! 27 ♙d2 ♙xe4 28 ♙db5?

A tactical mistake. After 28 ♙xe6! ♙dxe6 29 ♙xe4 ♙d8 30 ♙xd6 ♙xd6 31 ♙xd6 cxd6 32 ♙d1 White simply wins.

28...♙c2! 29 ♙f1 ♙f7 30 ♙d4 ½-½

After 30...♙e5 31 f4 ♙g4 32 ♙xc2 bxc2 33 ♙xc2 ♙xe3 34 ♙xe3 ♙b6 the position is level.

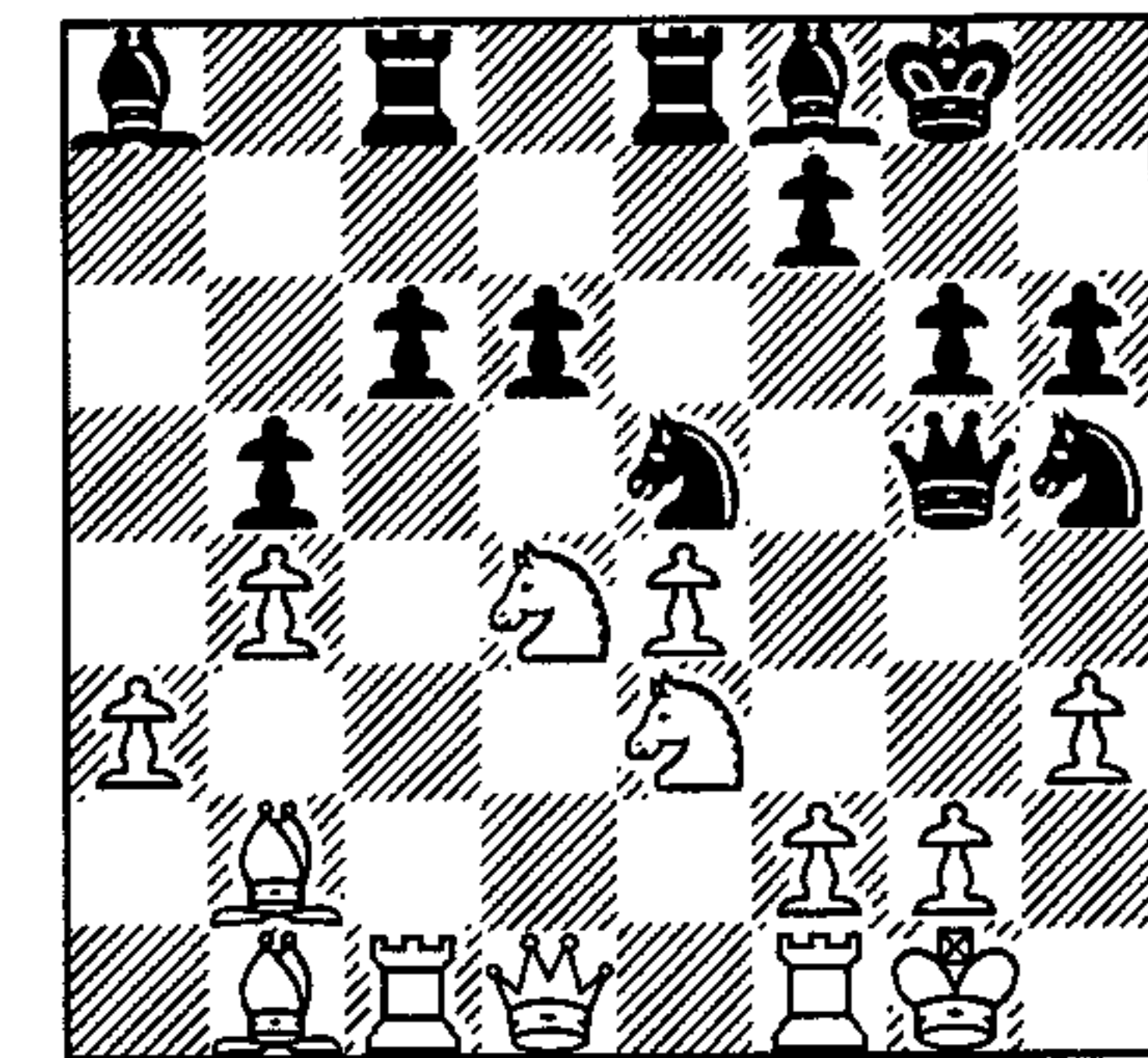
Exercise 62: White to move
Timman-Portisch
Antwerp 1989



White would have a clear advantage if he could drive the knight away from e5 with f2-f4. White's forces are almost all in place for this, so White played... 26 ♙f1! ♗g5?!

This proves to be less good. Neces-

sary was 26...♙f4 27 ♙e2! when, to avoid transposition, Black must play 27...♙xe2+ 28 ♗xe2 ♙d7! with an edge for White.



27 ♙e2! ♙f4

It is difficult to suggest other moves, but this leads by force to a clear advantage to White, so Black should probably step down from the fight for the f4-square.

28 ♙xf4 ♗xf4 29 g3 ♗f3

29...♗g5 30 ♖g2 does not improve Black's life. After 29...♗f6 30 ♙c3! the f-pawn can no longer be held back, although Black can try something like 30...♗e6 31 f4 ♗xh3! 32 fxe5 ♗xg3+ 33 ♙g2 c5! and the position is rather messy, despite the extra piece. Also possible here is 30 ♖g2! followed by ♗e2.

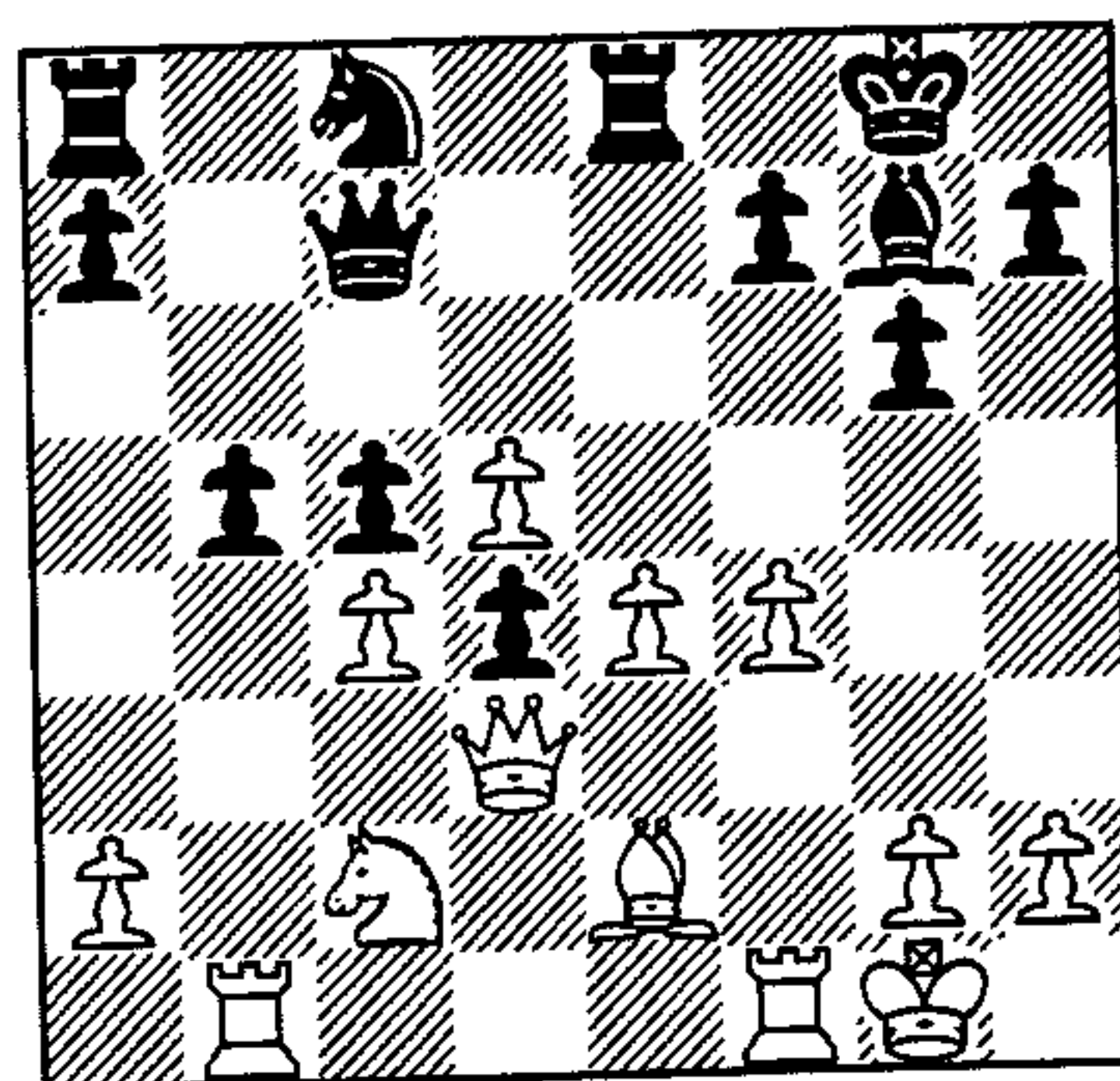
30 ♙g4! ♗xd1 31 ♙f6+ ♖h8 32 ♙fxd1 ♙ed8 33 ♙a2?!

White should have gone for 33 ♙xe5! dxe5 34 ♙d7 ♙g7 35 ♙d3 with a clear advantage. It is hard for Black to get his minor pieces to work.

33...♙g7 34 ♙xe5 dxe5 35 ♙d7 ♙c7 36 ♙c5?! ♙d4 37 ♙b3 ♙xd1+ 38 ♙xd1 ♙f6 39 ♙c5 ♖g7 40 ♙e6 ♙e7 41 ♙d7 ♙xd7 42 ♙xd7 ♖f8 43

♞d3 ♙d6 44 ♜f4 ♜f6 45 ♜f5 ♜g5! 46 ♜h4
 ♜e7 47 ♙e6 ♙b7 48 ♜f2 ♞d8 49
 ♜f3 ♜e7 50 ♜e3 ♞d8 51 ♜e2 ♜e7
 52 ♜f3 ♜f8 53 ♜g4 ♜g7 54 ♙d7
 ♙e7 55 ♜f3 ♜f8 56 ♜e3 ♙d8 57
 ♞c5 ♙b6 58 ♞d3 ♙xc5 59 ♜xc5
 ♜e7 60 ♙e6 ♞d8 61 ♜e3 ♜e7 62
 ♞d2 ½-½

Exercise 63: White to move
Portisch-Timman
 Antwerp 1989



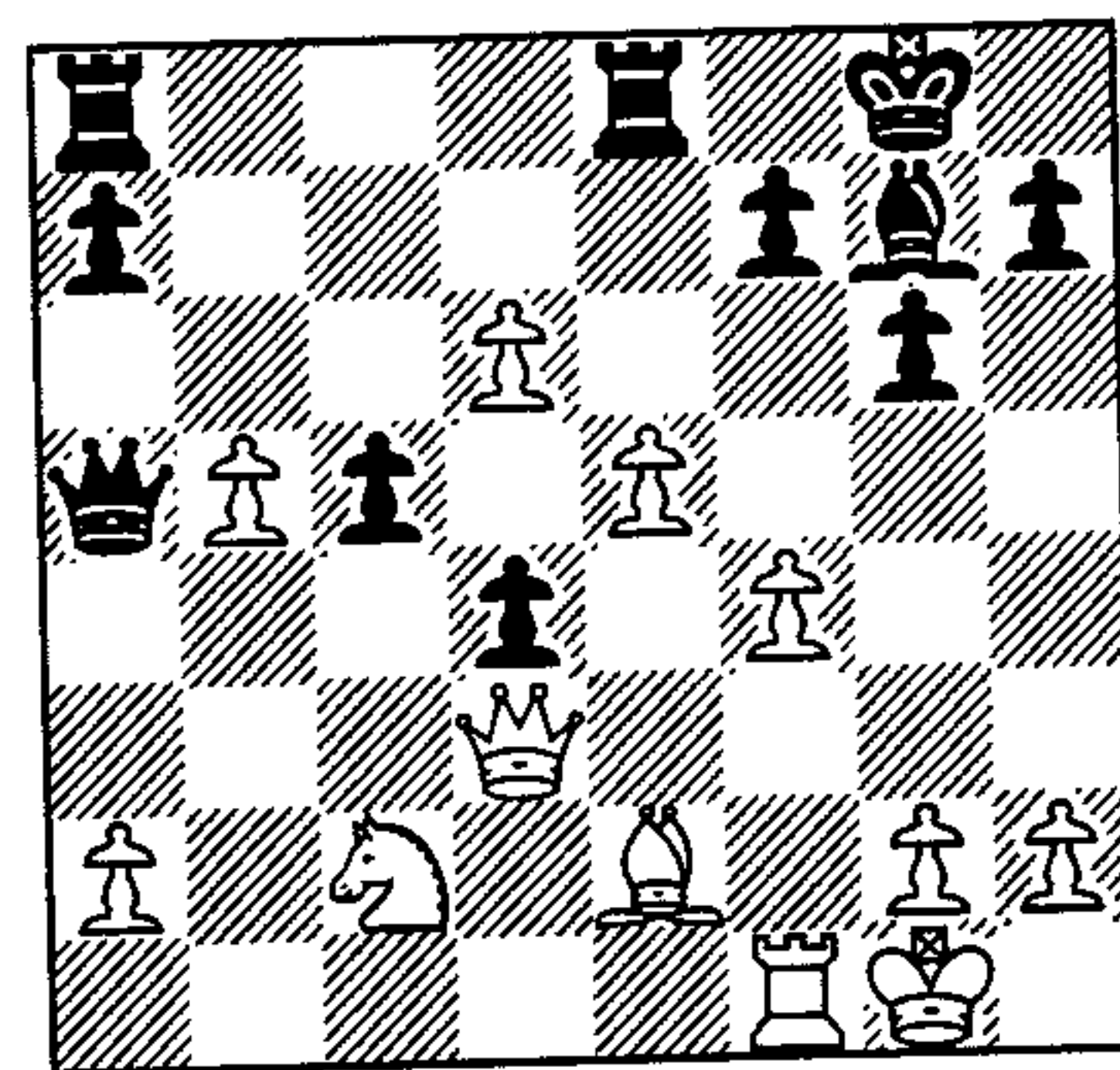
This position is not easy to evaluate, but for White there is simply no way to avoid sacrificing the exchange, as all other moves give Black a very pleasant game. That the exchange sacrifice not only offers White compensation but even a very strong position is a plus.

19 ♜xb5!

19 ♞a3 ♜b4 20 ♞c2 ♞b6 21 ♜e5 ♞a4 creates a very double-edged position in which White's knight has little future on c2.

19...♞d6 20 ♜e5 ♞xb5 21 ♜xb5 ♞a5 22 ♞d6!

The knight will find a good square on c4 and the bishop on c6, while it is not immediately apparent how Black will be able to mobilise his own forces.



22...♞xa2

22...g5? 23 ♞e4! followed by ♙d3 results in a strong attack for White.

23 ♞c4! ♞b2

23...♞xc4 24 ♙xc4 ♞ad8 25 ♞e1 ♞d7 26 ♞d3 is a perfect illustration of compensation. Though Black is ahead on points he still suffers badly from missing files for his rooks and a missing diagonal for his bishop. White can consider a plan such as g2-g4-g5 to bury the bishop completely, and then take the rook around to c6. What Black can do is a more difficult proposition.

24 ♙f3 ♞ab8 25 ♙c6

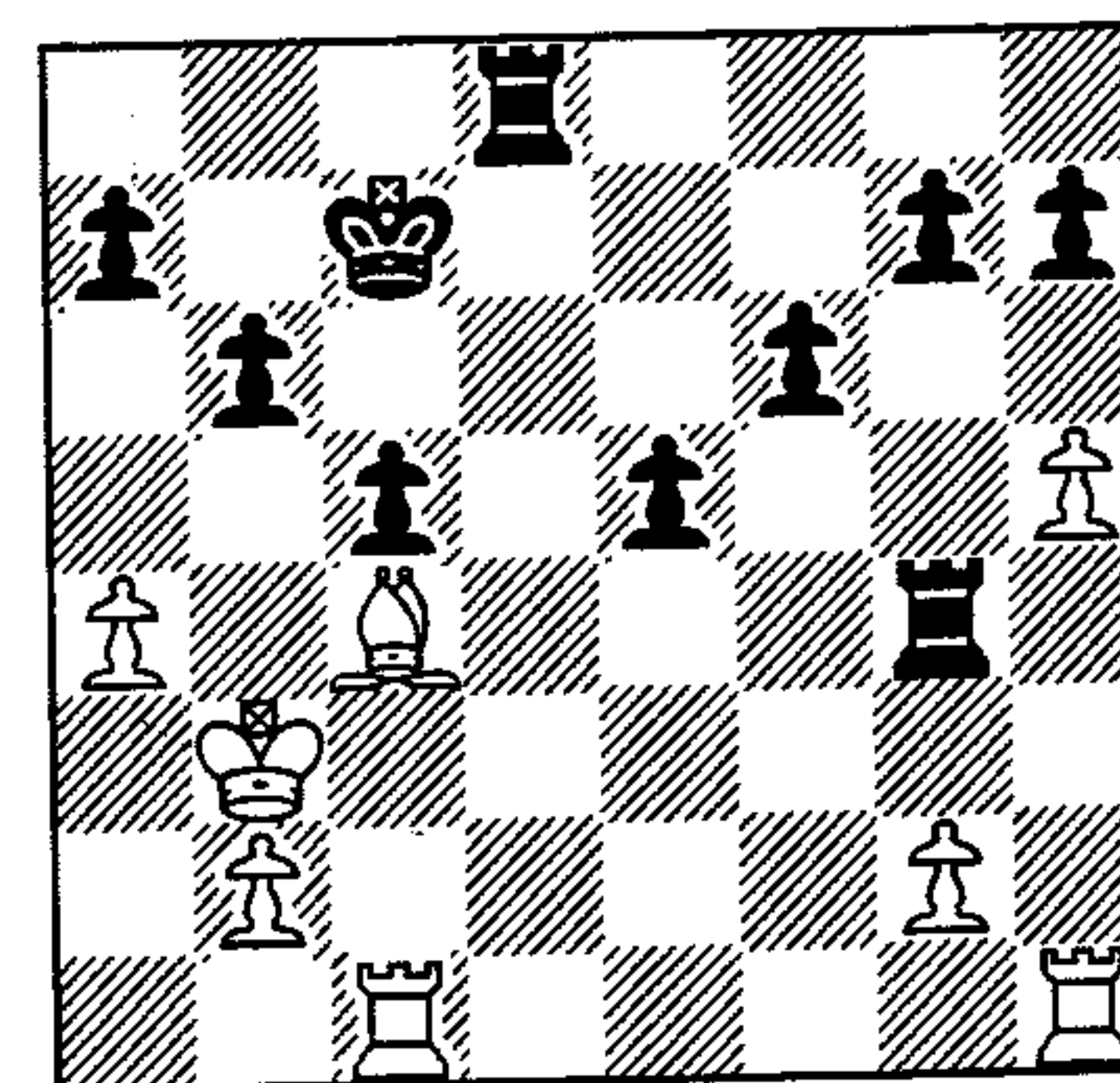
Patience, my friend. After 25 ♙d5?! ♞f8 26 ♙xf7+? ♞xf7 27 ♜e6 ♞fb7! 28 ♜e7+ ♜h8 there is nothing.

25...♞ed8 26 ♞xc5?!

Here Timman gives the following line, leading to a clear advantage: 26 ♞e1! ♞c3 27 ♙d5 ♞xc4 28 ♙xc4 ♜a6 29 ♜xa6 ♞b4 30 ♙d5 ♞a4! 31 ♞d3 ♞xa6 32 ♞xc5 ♞a5! (32...♞b6 33 ♞a1 ♞b5 34 ♙xf7+ ♜xf7 35 ♞a7+ ♜g8 36 ♞xg7+ ♜xg7 37 ♞e6+ ♜g8 38 ♞xd8 ♞d3 39 ♜f2 and White has all the chances) 33 ♞b7 ♞xd6! 34 ♙xf7+! ♜xf7 35 ♞xa5 ♞d5 36 ♞c4 ♜g5, when Black's task is to draw.

26...d3?! 27 ♞b4! ♞d2 28 ♞d3 ♞b3
 29 ♞f2 ♞a4! 30 ♜g3?! ♜a6! 31 ♜b6!
 ♞dc8 32 ♜b7 ♞xc6 33 ♞a7 ♞xb7 34
 ♞xb7 ♞c1 35 ♞f3? ♞d4 36 ♜g2
 ♞e1 37 ♞d1?! ♙f8 38 ♞f2 ♞d5+
 39 ♜g1 ♞xf1+ 40 ♜xf1 ♜f6+ 41
 ♜xf6 ♙xd6 42 ♞e3 ♜f7 43 ♜e2
 ♙c5 44 ♞c3 ♞e4+ 45 ♜f1 ♞h1+
 46 ♜e2 ♞xh2+ 47 ♜f3 ♞h1+ 0-1

Exercise 64: White to move
Karpov-Hjartarson
 Tilburg 1988



One very important rule in the end-game is to keep your pieces active. Here White seems to be having difficulty bringing his rooks into play. Additionally Black has a very healthy structure on the kingside (it seems), as well as passed pawns. Nevertheless White can indeed undermine the kingside, activate his rooks and put Black in a terrible situation in only one move!

29 ♜h6! ♞xg2?!

One student correctly pointed out that Black has no choice but to play 29...g6 because otherwise there will be too many weaknesses to defend. This is true, but his assessment that after this move the pawns start rolling is quite

inaccurate.

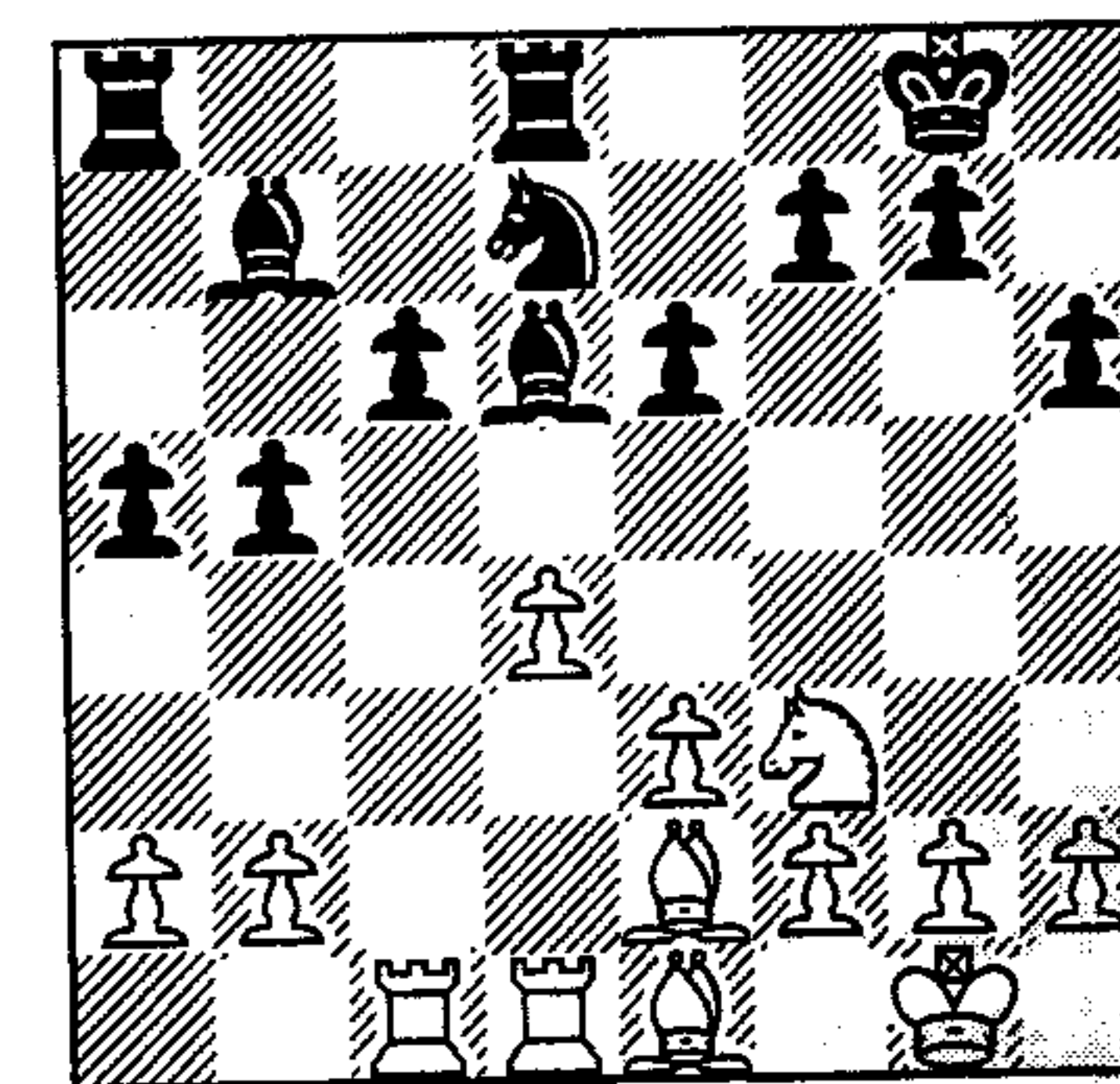
In endgames it is very important to fix weaknesses in the opponent's camp, and a weakness is defined as a point you can attack. Here that weakness is h7, adding weight to the h6-pawn. This needs to be proven in exact analysis, of course, as Karpov has done: 30 ♞hd1! (30 ♞cd1 allows 30...♞gd4 31 ♞xd4 ♜xd4! 30...♞gd4 (30...♞xd1 31 ♞xd1 ♞h4 32 ♙b5 ♞xh6 33 ♞d7+ presents White with new attacking fronts on the queenside; the pawns on a7 and b6 will fall quickly, after which White's a-pawn will be quick) 31 ♞xd4 ♞xd4 32 ♙g8 ♞d7 33 ♜c2 followed by ♞d1 and White is close to winning.

30 ♜xg7 ♞xg7 31 ♞cf1 ♞d6 32 ♞h6

White is winning.

32...e4 33 ♞hxf6 ♜h5 34 ♞f4 ♞d4 35 ♞f7+ ♞d7 36 ♞xg7 ♞xg7 37 ♞f4 ♞g3+ 38 ♜c2 ♞g2+ 39 ♜c3 ♞g3+ 40 ♜d2 ♞g4 41 ♞f7+ ♜d6 42 ♜e3 ♜a6 1-0

Exercise 65: White to move
Karpov-van der Wiel
 Tilburg 1988



White has no weaknesses. Black has two – c5 and c6. White's e2-bishop and

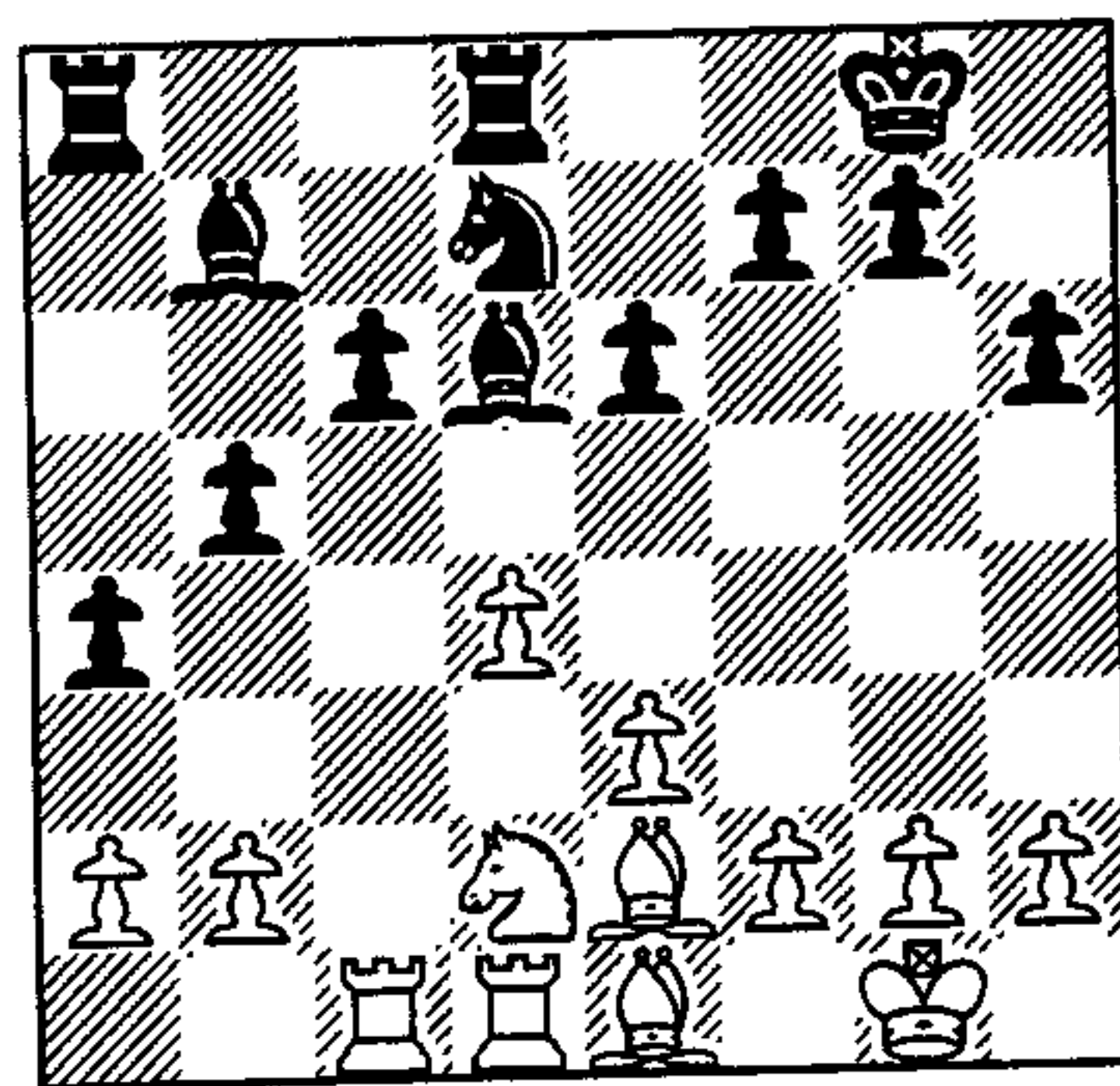
knight should be working in that direction, so some reorganisation is necessary.

19 d2!

The knight is going to c5 via e4 and the bishop is coming to f3. There is an alternative in 19 f1!, with the idea of 19...e5 20 dxe5 Qxe5 21 Bxd6 when White wins – a common accident. I believe nudging the king to the centre is a good move but, basically, I think Black improves his position just as much with 19...f8, and it is better for White to follow in the footsteps of Karpov with 19 d2.

19...a4

19...e5 20 Qe4 Qe7 21 dxe5 Qxe5 22 Bxd8+ leaves Black in a dilemma. Remember prophylaxis – it often happens when having your wishes granted and preventing what you want to prevent that a positional advantage materialises.



20 f3 Bb6 21 Qe4 Qe7 22 a3!

Preparing Bb4.

22...Ba7?! 23 Bb4!

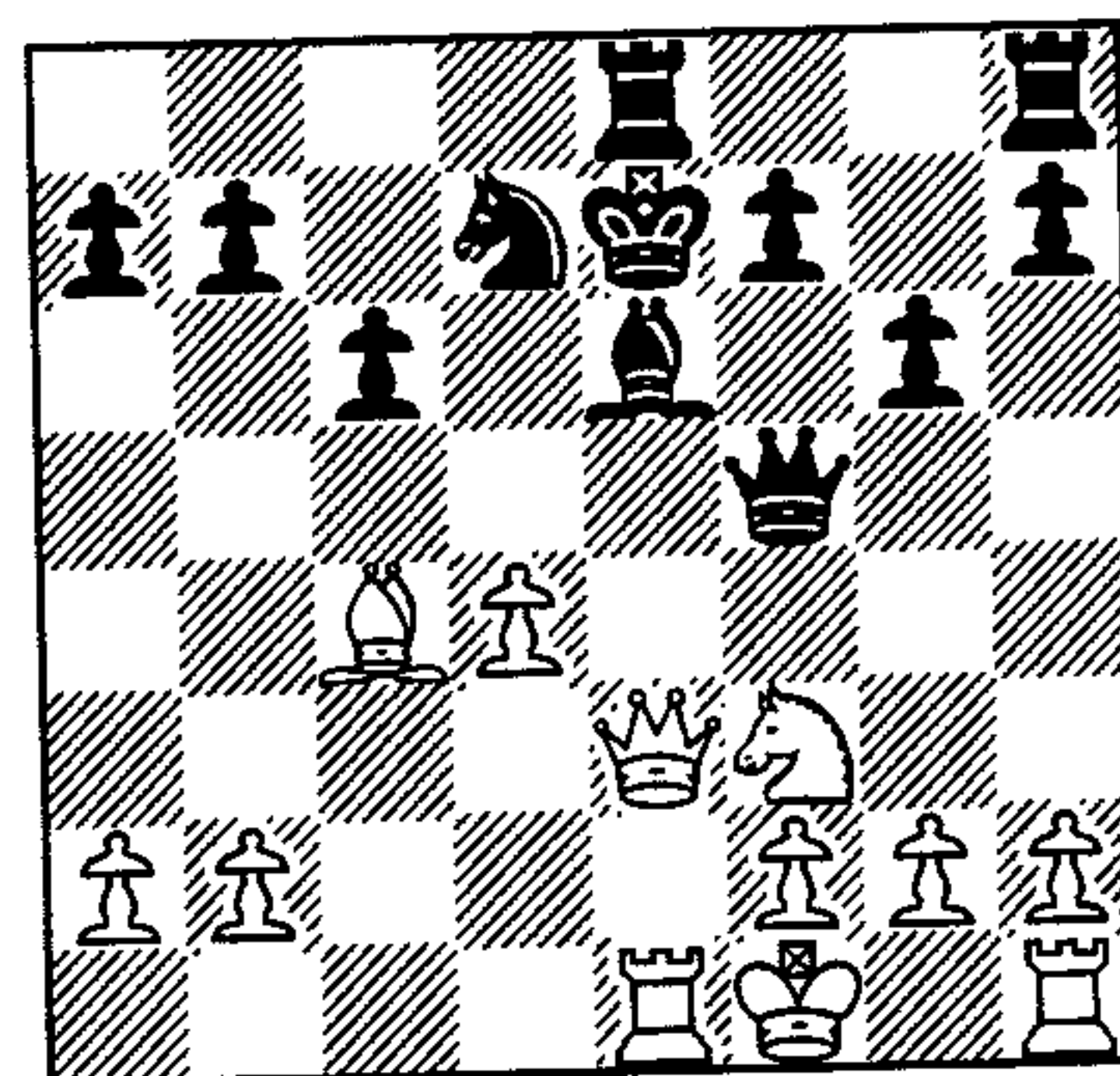
White is close to winning.

23...Qxb4 24 axb4 Qb6 25 Qc5 Qa8 26 Ba1

A move typical of Karpov's style. Now ...Qc4 can be met with b2-b3.

26...Qf8 27 Qf1 Qd7 28 Qd3! Qe7 29 Ba3 Qb6 30 Qe1 Bc8 31 b3 Bcc7 32 Bda1 Qb7 33 Qd1! Qc8 34 bxa4 bxa4 35 Qxa4 f6 36 Qb3 Bxa3 37 Bxa3 g5 38 Qd2 Qd6 39 Ba5 Qe7 40 Qc5 f5 41 Qd3 Qd5 42 f3 Bb7 43 Qxd5 exd5 44 Ba8 1-0

Exercise 66: White to move
Karpov-Yusupov
1988 USSR Championships



This is a very famous position and hardly a difficult exercise. White needs to activate his forces and can best do so through a pawn sacrifice.

16 d5!!

16 Qxe6 fxe6 17 Qa3+ Qf6 offers White nothing since after 18 Qxa7? Qb5+ 19 Qg1 Ba8 the queen would be trapped. Nor is 16 Qa3+ Qf6 17 Qd3 Qd5 18 Qxa7 Qg4 any good as Black's pieces are suddenly useful, while White is still undeveloped. Also harmless is 16 Qg5 after 16...Qd8! 17 Qxe6 (17 Qxe6+ fxe6 18 Qxe6 Qb5+ 19 Qg1 Qe7! and ...Qae8) 17...fxe6 18 Qxe6+ Qc8 19 Qb3 Qe7, when Black is not worse.

16...cxd5 17 Qb5!

Precise chess. The d4-square will not run away, so White should not be too eager. After the basic 17 Qd4 Qe5! White's advantage evaporates because 18 Qa3+ can easily be met with 18...Qd6 and Black is doing well.

17...a6?!

This does not look good as now White wins almost by force. 17...Qf8?! 18 Qc3, intending Qd4xe6, is hardly advisable, either. 17...d4!?, as suggested by Karpov, seems logical. The bishop is freed a little and the knight will be less free on d4 than with a black pawn on d5. This is what I would call unforcing thinking. White has accumulated numerous advantages and now presents some threats, so Black will have to get away from all kinds of forced lines as these all seem to lead to his end.

18 Qa3+ Qd8

18...Qf6? 19 Qxd7 Qxd7 20 Qc3+ and White wins.

19 Qa5+! Qe7

White also wins after 19...Qc8 20 Bc1+ Qb8 21 Qc7+ Qa8 22 Qd4 Qf6 23 Qxa6 Bb8 24 Qa5 Qxd4 25 Qxb7+ Qxb7 26 Bc7 mate!

20 Qb4+ Qf6

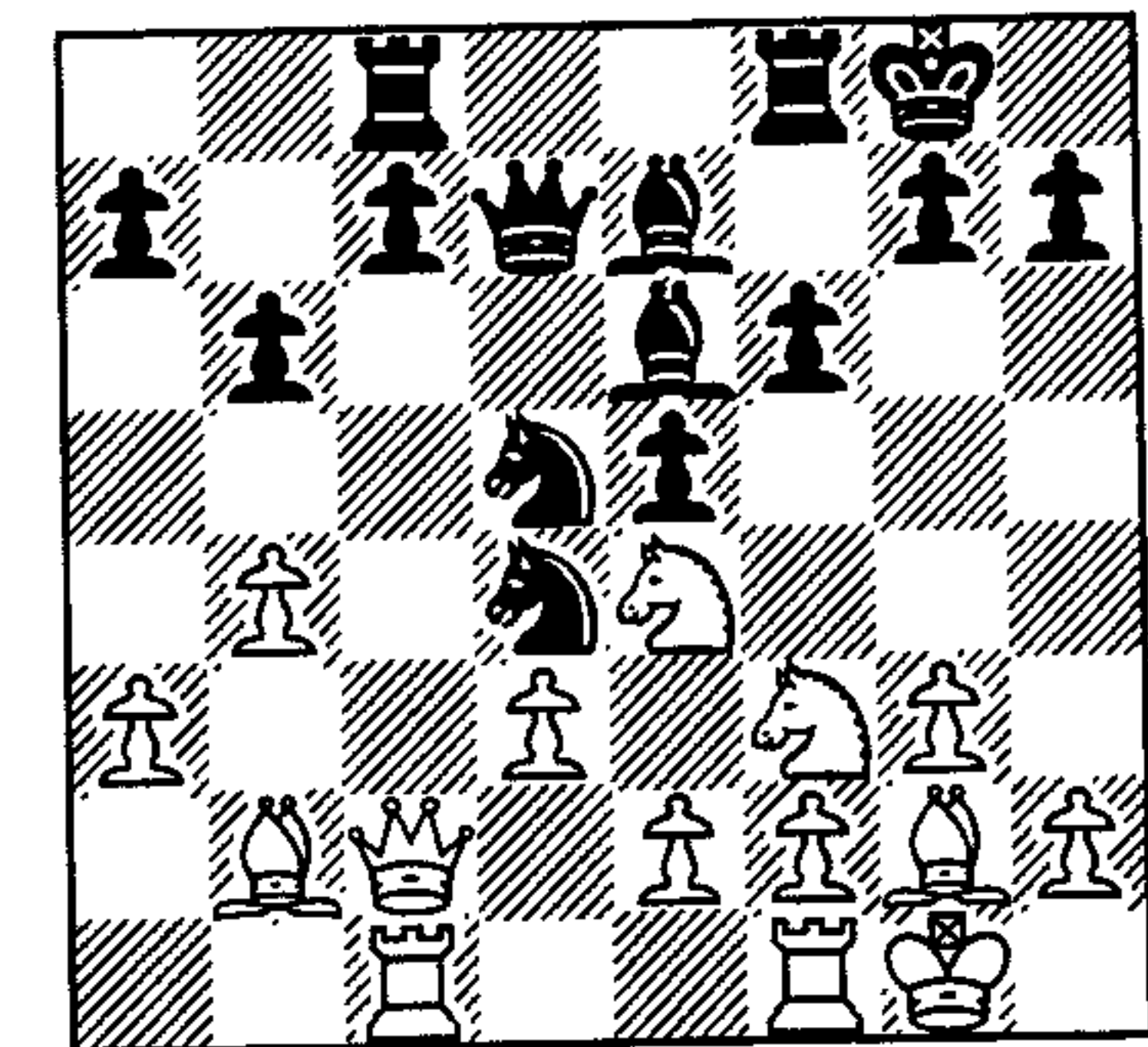
Zaitsev gives 20...Qd8?! 21 Qd4 Qf6 22 Qxa6! bxa6 23 Bc1! Bg8 24 Bc6! etc. (e.g. 24...Qe5 25 Bxe6!).

21 Qd4+ Qe7 22 Qd3 Qh5 23 h4! Qd8 24 Qg5 Bhf8 25 Qe2! Qh6 26 Qf3 Qe7 27 Qb4 Qf6 28 Qd6+ Bd7 29 Qf4 Qg8 30 Qg4 Qc8 31 Qxe6 fxe6 32 Bc1+ Qd8 33 Qxe6+ Qe7 34 Qxf8+ Qxf8 35 Qxf8 Qxf8 36 Bh3 Qe7 37 h5 Qg7 38 h6+ Qf6 39 Bf3+ Qe6 40 Be1+ Qd6 41 Bf6+ Qc7 42 g4 Qc6 43 Be8 1-0

Exercise 67: White to move

Karpov-Hjartarson

Seattle 1989



In his excellent book *Technique for the Tournament Player* Mark Dvoretsky features a chapter called *Exploiting an Advantage*. Here he investigates different techniques, one of them being Do not Hurry. This means that improving static advantages slowly can be a very useful way to prepare for an attack. But sometimes you also have to jump and change the nature of your advantage in order to make the most of your position.

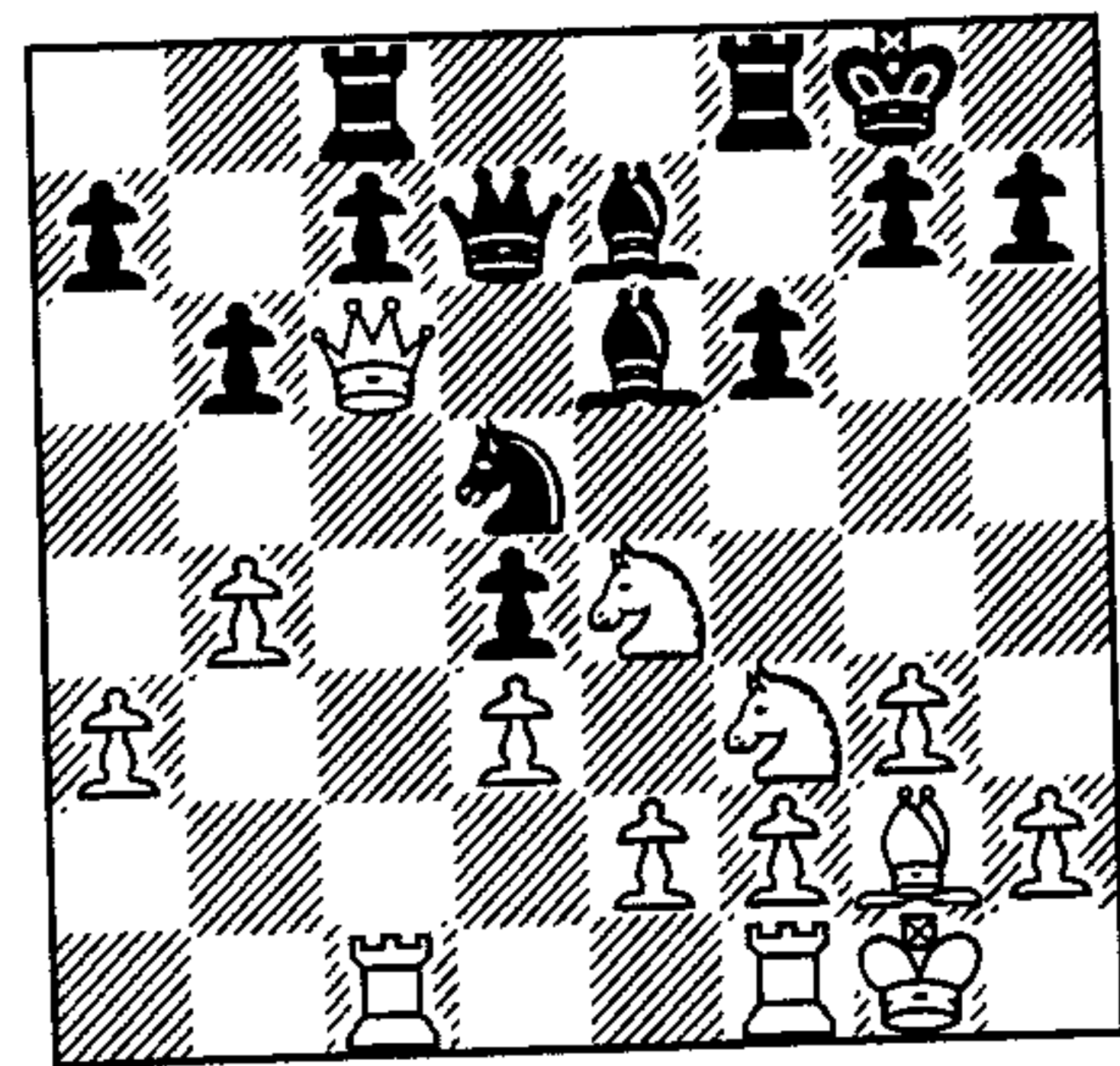
Dvoretsky argues very well the case that Karpov and Flohr, players with great technique, too often waited to see what their opponents would do in defence, thus losing their advantage through their failure to act when necessary.

This diagram position is an exception to this, however, as Karpov makes the most of his static advantage (the backward c-pawn) through a tactical exchange sacrifice.

16 Qxd4! exd4 17 Qc6!

This is again tactical. 17 Qxd4 Qxb4 18 axb4 Qxd4 19 b5 also provides White with some advantage but if Black is able

to neutralise the b-pawn then White will not have anything but trouble, e.g. 19...f5 20 e3 (20 d2!? f4 21 Wc6 d6 22 d3 might improve) 20...Wd7 21 d3 b4 should offer Black reasonable chances to defend.



17...Wxc6 18 Bxc6 d7 19 dxd4!

The point. Black has no alternative but to part with two pawns for the exchange, after which White's domination of the light squares gives him a clear advantage. Please note the enormous advantage the opposite coloured bishops are to White in this position. 19 Bcc1 c5! would not be better for White.

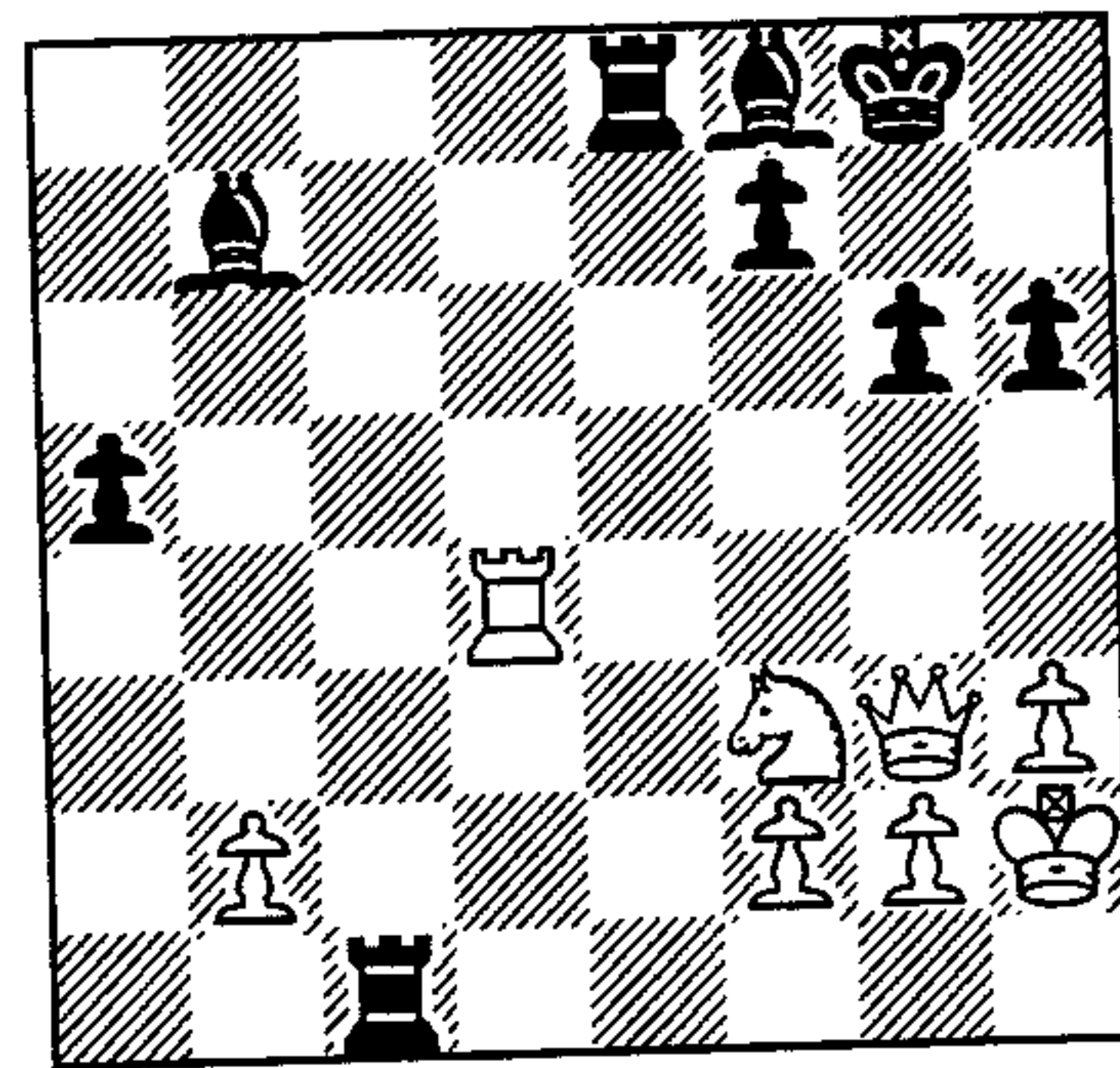
19...dxc6 20 dxc6 Bce8

Probably the only move. 20...Bf7 21 d5! and 20...e7 21 dxa7 Ba8 22 d6! e6 23 ddb5 are decisive. Here you could imagine something like 23...d6 24 dxc6 de7 25 dcd4+ d7 26 dxa8 and White will certainly win.

21 Bc1 f5 22 d2 d6 23 dxa7 d6 24 e3 c5 25 d4 b8 26 d6 b5 27 d4a5 cxb4 28 axb4 d7 29 d4 g5 30 dxb8!? Bxb8 31 Bc7 d6 32 d6 Bb6 33 de7+ dh8 34 dxf5 Ba6 35 Bc1 Ba2?! 36 h3! Bb2 37 e4 Bxb4 38 g4 h5 39 e5 hxg4 40 exf6 gxh3 41 dxh3 Bxf6 42

Bc8+ dh7 43 Bc7+ dg6 44 Bg7+ dh5 45 f3! 1-0

Exercise 68: Black to move
Hjartarson-Karpov
Seattle Match 1989



I remember seeing this game in *Chess Informant* in 1990 and not understanding anything despite reading the annotations. Only now, when I am 12 years older (and 7 Elo points lower) do I understand it.

30...Bc5!!

A wonderful move, with a particular focus on ideal squares. Black's light-squared bishop looks good but, in reality, it is not doing much. The rook on c1 also looked okay but was working alone. The other bishop should probably be on g7 but, again, nothing is clear.

What is obvious is that White will be able to attack both f7 and a5, and Black will at best make a draw in the normal course of the game. But after the text move, everything changes. The rook will find a wonderful outpost on f5, where it defends f7 and attacks the f-pawn. The bishop will suddenly be able to attack the king from e5 and the rook on e8 is free to do whatever. White con-

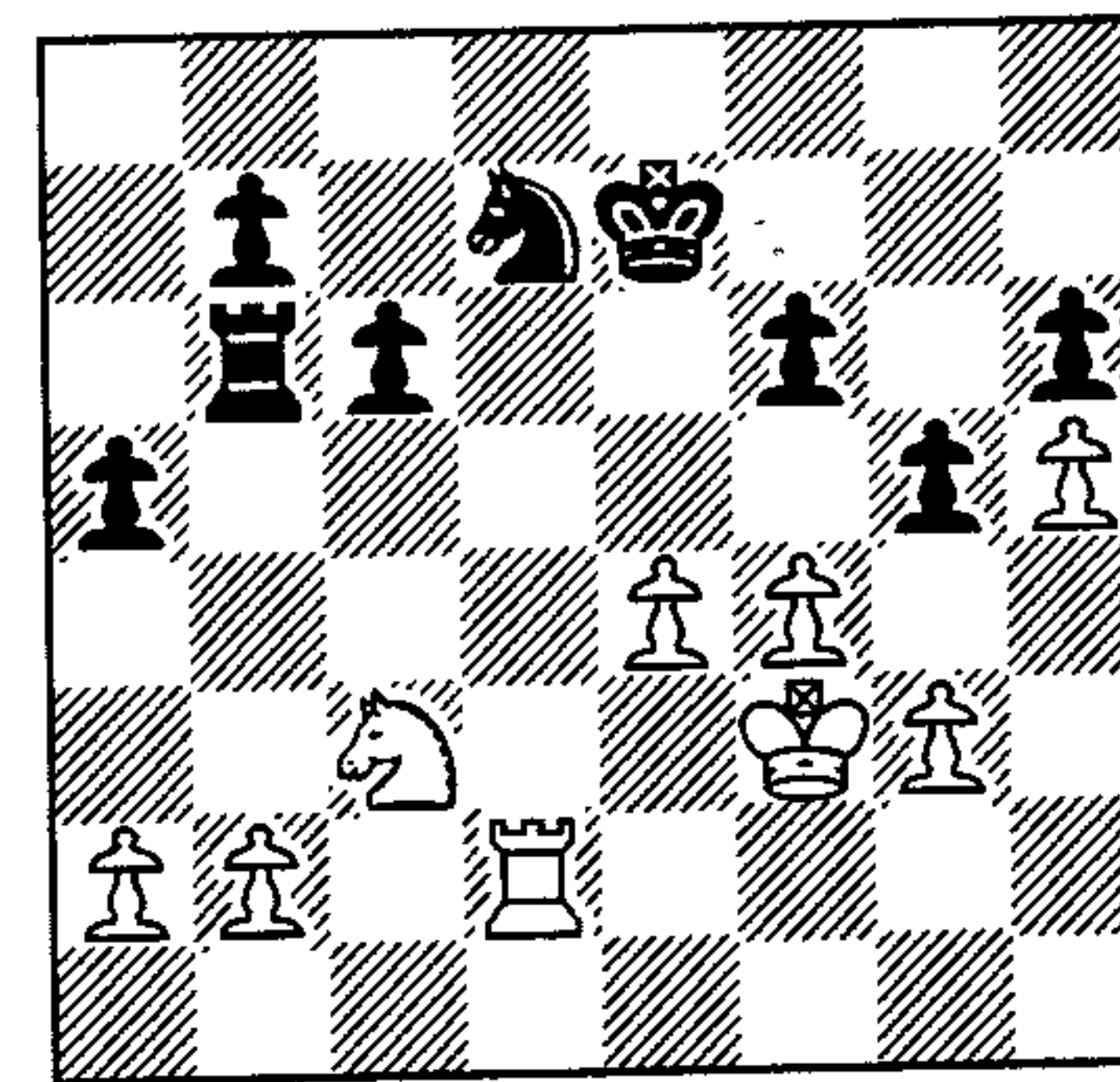
tinued logically.

31 Bd7

Also possible is the more passive 31 Bd3 dg7 32 b3 Bf5 but then Black is in very good shape. The main threat is, of course ...dxf3, and after both 33 Wh4 Be2! and 33 Wg4 Be2 34 Bd8+ dh7 Black is doing well. The main idea here, though, is 35 dg5+? Bxg5 36 Wxe2 Bxg2+ and Black wins.

31...dxf3 32 Wxf3 Bf5 1/2-1/2

Black offered a draw as it suited his position in the match. After 33 Wg3 dg7 34 f4 dxb2! Black has a slightly better endgame. But not 34...Bxf4?! 35 Wxf4 de5 36 Bxf7 with an immediate draw.



Exercise 69: White to move
Karpov-Seirawan
Skelleftea 1989

Here is a classical case of wanting and executing. To my delight most of my students quickly realised that the primary idea for White in this position is to bring the knight to f5. The only question is that of which route to take. The answer is a little complicated, and most of them, unfortunately, failed to find the right path.

29 de2!

With the threat of d4-f5. The alternative 29 d1?! is less good as Black can activate his rook with counterplay with 29...gxf4 30 gxf4 Bb5!, when White does retain some advantage after 31 Bh2 f5 32 e5 but this is less clear than the

29 nec5

This is the move that dissuades people from de2.

30 dc3!

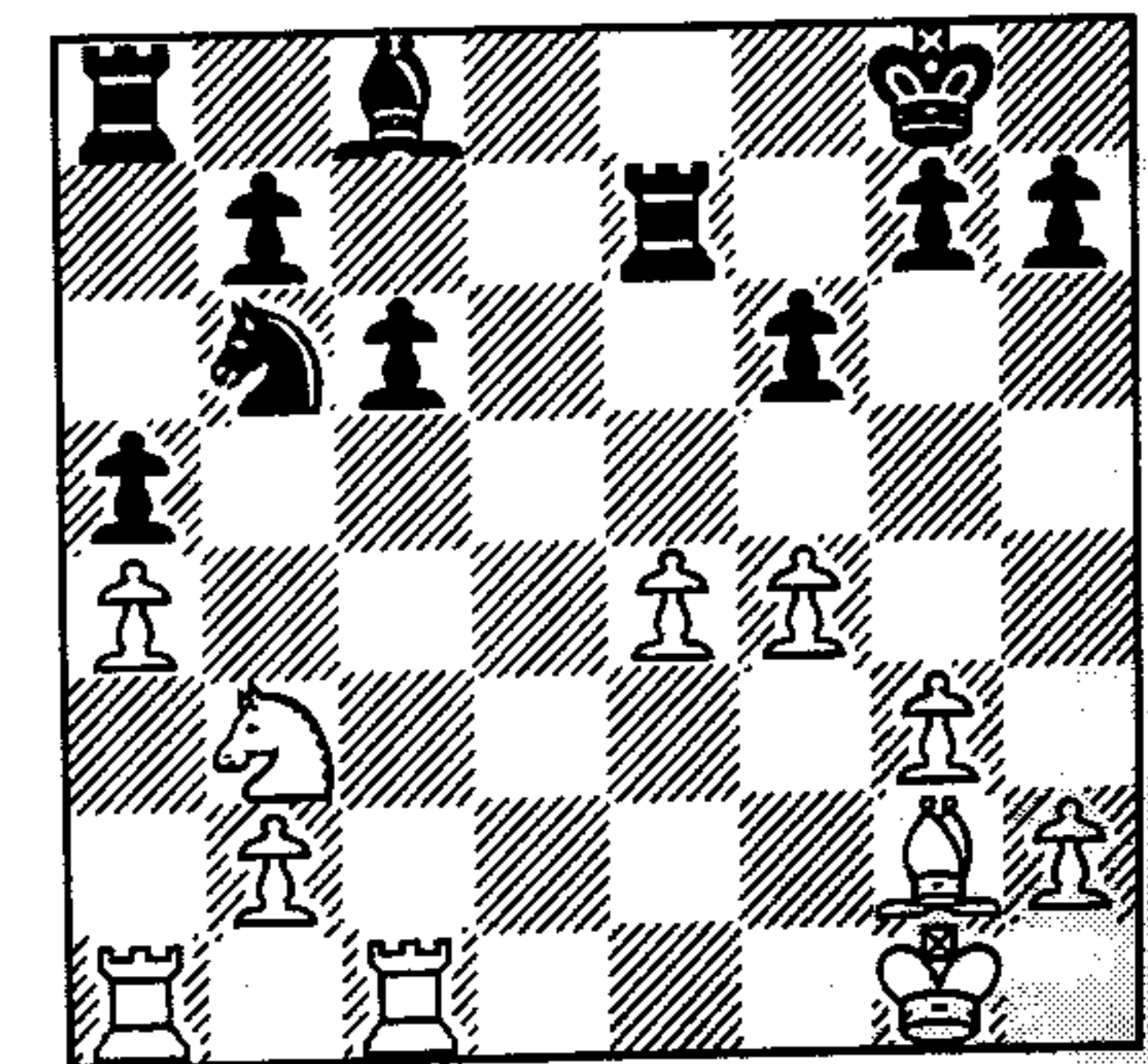
Very nice. Now the weak light squares in Black's camp are plain to see.

30...Bd6 31 Bd5! Bxd5 32 dxd5+ de6

But could have put up more resistance with 32...e7 33 de3 dg7, though after 34 a4 it is obvious that White has control of the position and Black has many weaknesses. I cannot believe that such a position can be saved.

33 de3 b5 34 d5 db6 35 dxh6 dc4 36 d5 ef7 37 b3 dd2+ 38 de3 1-0

Exercise 70: White to move
Karpov-Andersson
Thessaloniki Olympiad 1988



A classical worst placed piece scenario. The a1-rook is not very well

placed and would very much like to come out. Meanwhile 20 ♖c5 can be answered quite well with 20...♗d7!, giving Black a tenable position.

Sometimes it is a good idea to look for the opponent's next move as this might tell us something about what we should do. In this case this is 20...♗e6. Knowing this, it should not be too difficult to find our way, even if White's next is rather odd.

20 ♖a3!!

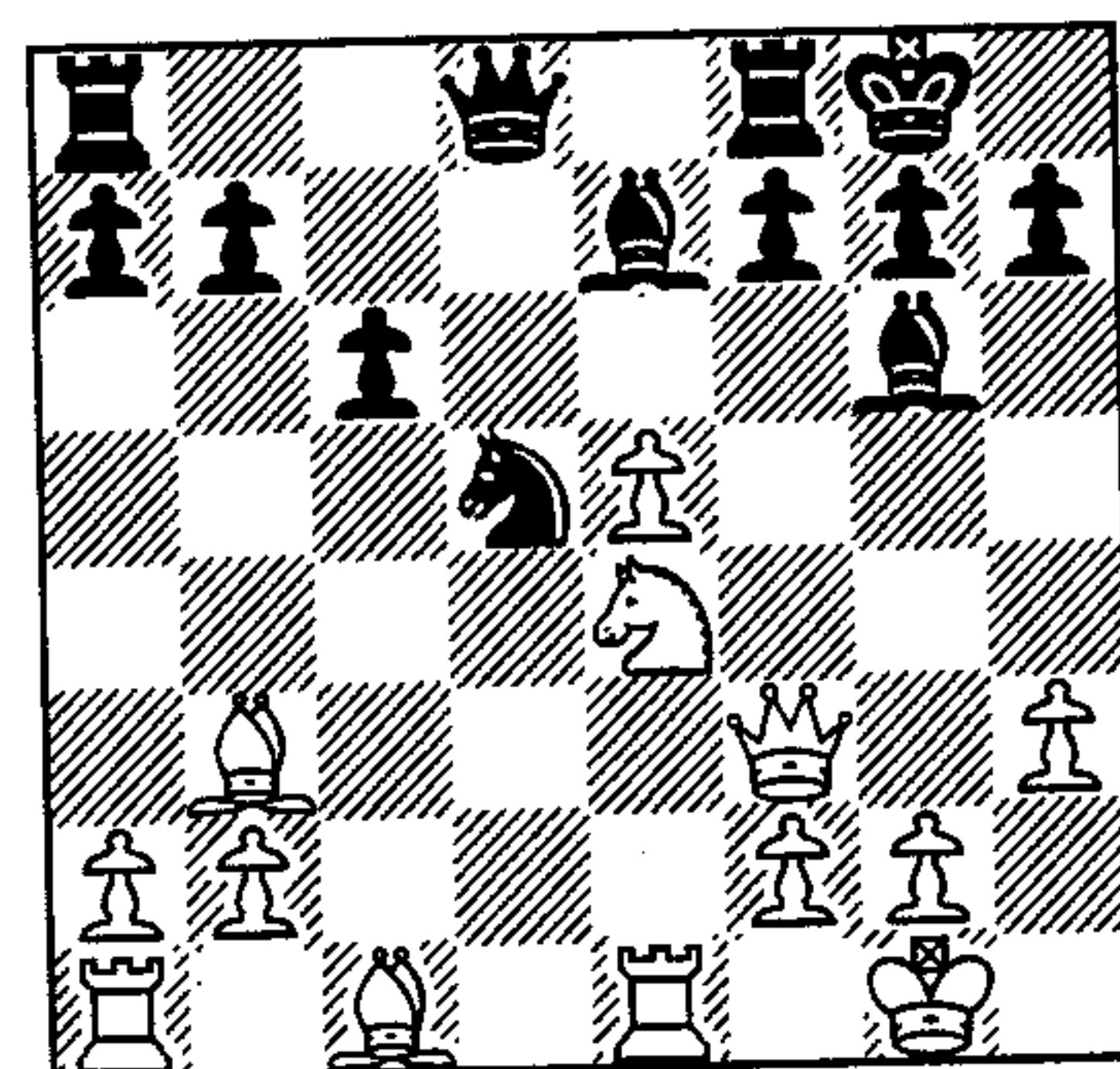
Best. Of course it takes some explanation why this is better than the tempting line many of my students came up with, namely 20 ♖c5!? ♗e6 21 ♖xa5! ♗d7 22 ♖xb7 when Black can either play with an exchange against two pawns or a piece against three pawns after 22...♖b8 23 ♖xc6 ♖xb7 24 a5 – in my opinion this is a very dangerous position for Black, and the acceptance of the exchange is far more logical. Nevertheless White seems to retain all the chances.

However, I believe 20 ♖a3! is a much better move as it results in a clear advantage without taking any chances. White already has a static advantage and then brings his pieces into play in a very harmonious way. I will leave it to you to make up your own mind on this, but at least you know why I mean what I mean.

20...♗e6 21 ♖c5 ♗f7 22 ♖d3 ♖ae8 23 ♗h3 ♖c8 24 ♗d7 ♖d8 25 ♖cd1 ♖b6 26 ♗g4 ♖xd3 27 ♖xd3 ♗f8 28 ♖d8+ ♖e8 29 ♖d4! ♖b8 30 ♖d7! h5 31 ♗h3 ♗e8 32 ♖c7 ♖a8 33 ♖xb7 ♖xb7 34 ♖xb7 ♖b6 35 ♖d6+! ♗e7 36 ♖xf7 ♖xa4!? 37 ♖h8! ♖xb2 38 e5 a4 39 ♖g6+ ♗e8 40 ♗e6 ♖d3

41 ♗g8! fxe5 42 ♖xe5 ♖b4 43 ♖c4 h4 44 ♗h7 hxg3 45 hxg3 ♗e7 46 ♗e4 ♗f6 47 g4 ♗e6 48 ♗f2 ♖d5 49 ♗f3 ♖b4 50 g5 c5 51 f5+ ♗e7 52 ♗e3 ♗f8 53 ♖d2 ♗e7 54 ♗c3 1-0

Exercise 71: White to move
Karpov-Timman
Amsterdam 1991



I remember that, when collecting the raw material for these exercises, only a few positions made me aware of seeing something that I did not initially understand. This is one of those. If we quickly compare pieces, then we will soon find out that the e7-bishop is Black's worst piece and the c1-bishop is White's worst. We also see that White's knight would be very well placed on d6, and in the case of an exchange and the transformation of the e-pawn into a passed pawn, the bishop on g6 would be misplaced.

It is my experience that most students overrate the bishops in a situation like this, and refrain from ♗f4 simply because of the possible exchange there. However, a look at the knight on d5 suggests that this might not be some-

thing we should fear. Therefore the right course of development revolves around finding the ideal square for the dark-squared bishop, and that is f4. There is no other square to offer the bishop an immediate future.

16 ♗f4!

With the intention of ♖d6. Black now replied...

16...♖a5

...And quickly went downhill. But could he have defended better? I have analysed two alternatives.

The first is 16...♖xf4 17 ♖xf4 ♗xe4 18 ♖xe4, when there is no reason to look any further. The f7-pawn is terribly weak, as are the light squares around Black's king. The old rule concerning opposite coloured bishops is like this – in a pure opposite bishop endgame they can be a drawing factor if the defender is successful in putting his pawns on the same colour complex as his bishop (while the attacker will put his pawns on the colour of the opponent's bishop). In the middlegame opposite coloured bishops favour the attacker (in a situation like this) as he will simply have one more piece involved in the fight for the squares of his bishop's colour. Finally there is a minor rule – if you have a winning position there is no easier way to transform it into a full point than with opposite coloured bishops. Of course you should be very careful in this case as you might end up in a drawn endgame if you are not fully aware of what is going on.

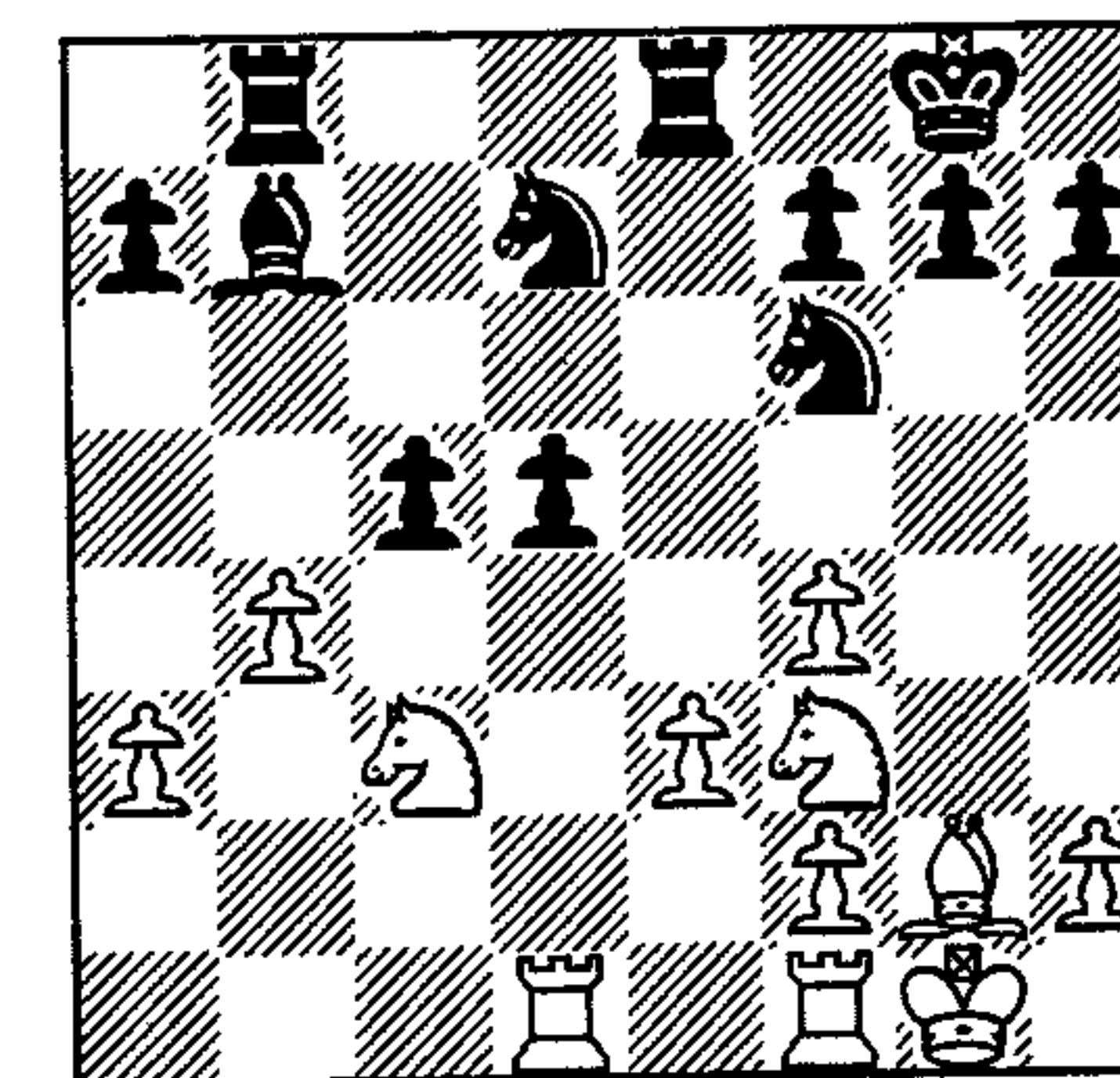
Next we have 16...♗xe4!? 17 ♖xe4 ♖a5 which, in my opinion, is the only possible defence for Black. He prevents ♖d6 and prepares the development of

his a8-rook. However, this position is uncomfortable for Black. White has the two bishops, might plan an exchange on d5, might start a kingside offensive and still there is a lead in development. Of course Black has some chances to defend.

17 ♖d6! ♗xd6 18 exd6 ♖fe8 19 ♖xe8+ ♖xe8 20 ♗xd5! cxd5 21 d7! ♖e7 22 ♖c1 ♖xd7 23 ♖c8+ ♖d8 24 b4! ♖b6 25 ♗c7 ♖xc8 26 ♗xb6 axb6 27 ♖xd5 h6 28 ♖xb7 ♖c1+ 29 ♗h2 ♖c2 30 ♖xb6 ♖xa2 31 ♖d4! 1-0

But why was it that this example was so fresh for me? It was simply the enormous power of the passed pawn on d6. I did not realise it before playing through the game. Did you?

Exercise 72: Black to move
Gelfand-Karpov
Reggio Emilia 1991



With his latest move, 18 b4, White is trying to establish a strong blockade on d4. Black, naturally, will not sit back and let this happen, and he forces White to occupy the square with his own pawn!

18...d4!

There followed a forced sequence.

19 exd4 cxb4! 20 axb4 ♖xf3 21 ♖xf3 ♖xb4 22 ♘d5!

White cleverly seeks salvation in a rook endgame that is uncomfortable but perhaps possible to hold. 22 ♖c6?! meets with 22...♗d8.

22...♘xd5 23 ♖xd5 ♘f6

Here Black could have played more ambitiously with 23...♗d8 24 ♖c6 ♘f8 25 d5 ♖xf4 26 ♖a1 ♗d6 with a slight advantage according to Karpov. I think that White should be able to make a draw quite easily with 27 ♖fe1! but there is no disputing who is under pressure.

24 ♖c6 ♗d8

24...♗c8!? 25 d5 ♖xf4 26 ♖a1 ♗c7 was a possible attempt to keep some life in the position, but I feel that the passed pawn will soon let White escape into the same endgame as in the game.

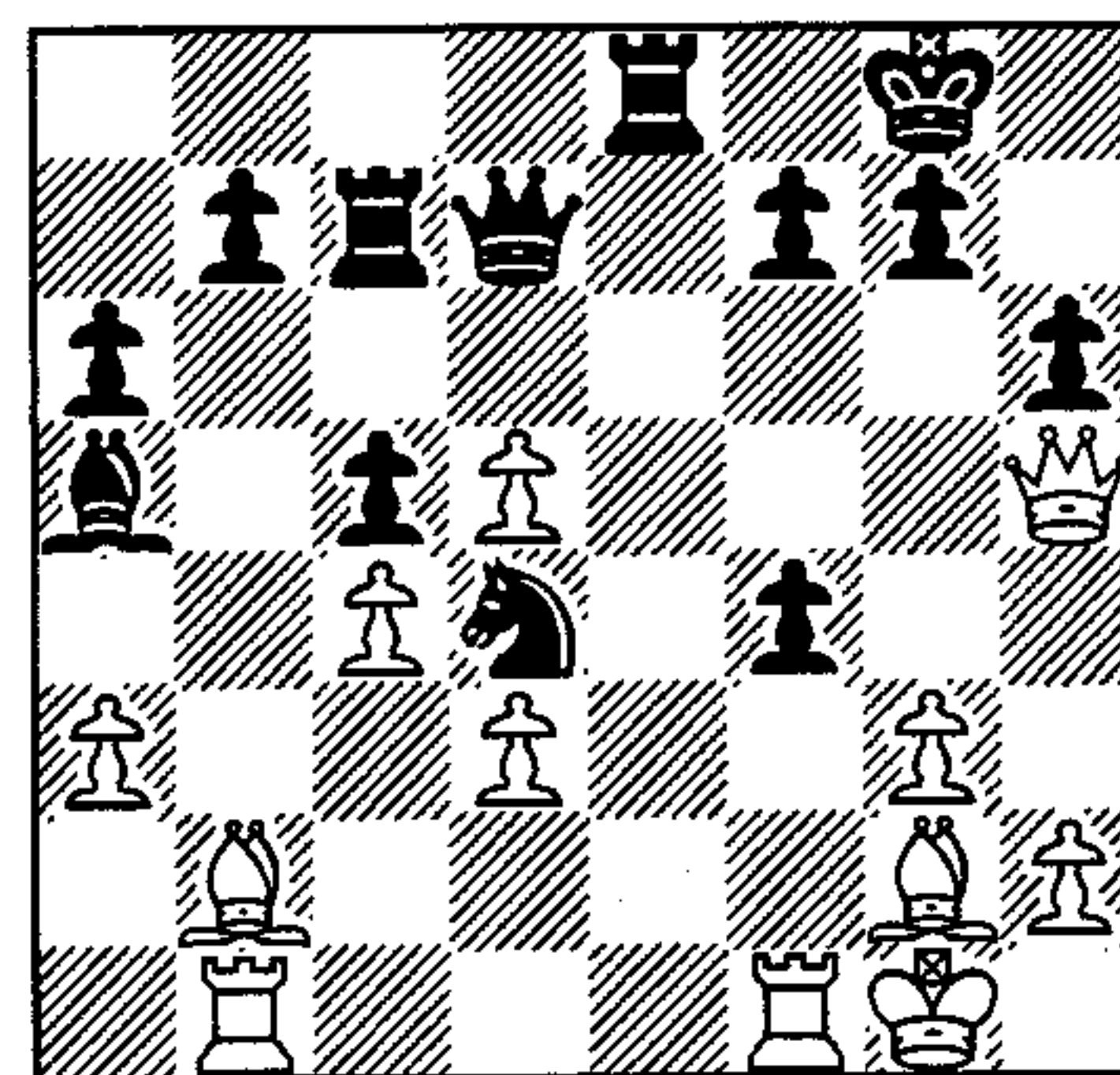
25 d5 ♖xf4 26 ♖a1 ♗d6 27 ♖xa7 h5 28 f3 ♘xd5

28...♘e4!? is met with 29 ♖a4! ♖g6+ 30 ♖h1 ♖gf6 31 ♖b1 and perhaps White is on his way to being better.

29 ♖xd5 ♖xd5 30 ♖a3 ♖g5+ 31 ♖h1 ♖h7 32 ♖e3 ♖h6 33 ♖g1 ♖a5 34 ♗d3 ♖f6 35 ♗c3 ♖ff5 36 ♗d3 g6 37 ♗c3 ♖a4 38 ♗d3 ♖g7 39 ♗c3 ♖f6 40 ♖e3 ♖e5 41 ♖ge1 ♖xe3 42 ♖xe3 ♖f5 43 ♖e2 ♖f4 44 ♖g2 g5 45 ♖f2 f5 46 ♖b2 g4 47 fxg4 hxg4 48 ♗c2 ♖a3 49 ♖b2 ♖g5 50 ♖b8 ♖a2+ 51 ♖g1 ♗d2 52 ♖a8 ♖f4 53 ♖a3 ♖e2 54 ♖a1 ♖f3 55 ♖f1+ ♖e4 56 ♖a1 f4 57 ♗d1 ♗c2 58 ♖e1+ ♖f3 59 ♖f1+ ♖e3 60 ♖e1+ ♖e2 61 ♖a1 ♗c2 62 ♖e1+ ♖d3 63 ♖f1 f3 64 ♖a1 ♖e2 65 ♖b1 ♖a2 66 ♖f1 ♖e3 67 ♖b1 ♖a4 68 ♖b3+ ♖f4 69 ♖b8 ♖a1+ 70 ♖f2 ♖a2+ 71 ♖g1 ♖g2+ 72 ♖h1 ♗d2 73 ♖g1 ♖g2+

74 ♖h1 ♖e2 75 ♖g1 ♗c2 76 ♖b4+ ♖e3 77 ♖b3+ ♖e2 78 ♖b1 ♗d2 79 ♖a1 ♖b2 80 ♖f1 ♖e3 81 ♖a1 ♖g2+ 82 ♖h1 g3 83 ♖a3+ ♖f4 84 ♖a4+ ♖f5 85 hxg3 ♖xg3 86 ♖h2 ♖g4 87 ♖a5+ ♖f4 88 ♖a4+ ♖g5 89 ♖a3 f2 90 ♖f3 ♖f4 91 ♖xf4 ½-½

Exercise 73: White to move
Kamsky-Karpov
Reggio Emilia 1991



Theme: Always keep your eyes peeled. One of the things that should always be imprinted in your mind is hanging pieces. Here White starts with a rather basic combination.

25 ♖xd4! cxd4 26 d6!

White wins a piece, but matters are not always that easy!

26...♗xd6 27 ♗xa5 fxg3

Watch these pawns fall.

28 hxg3?

Permitting Black to generate play with his rook. The right move was 28 ♗d5!, when White has the advantage.

28...♖e3 29 ♗d5 ♗xd5 30 ♖xd5 ♖xg3+ 31 ♖h2 ♖xd3 32 ♖xf7 ♖xf7 33 ♖f1

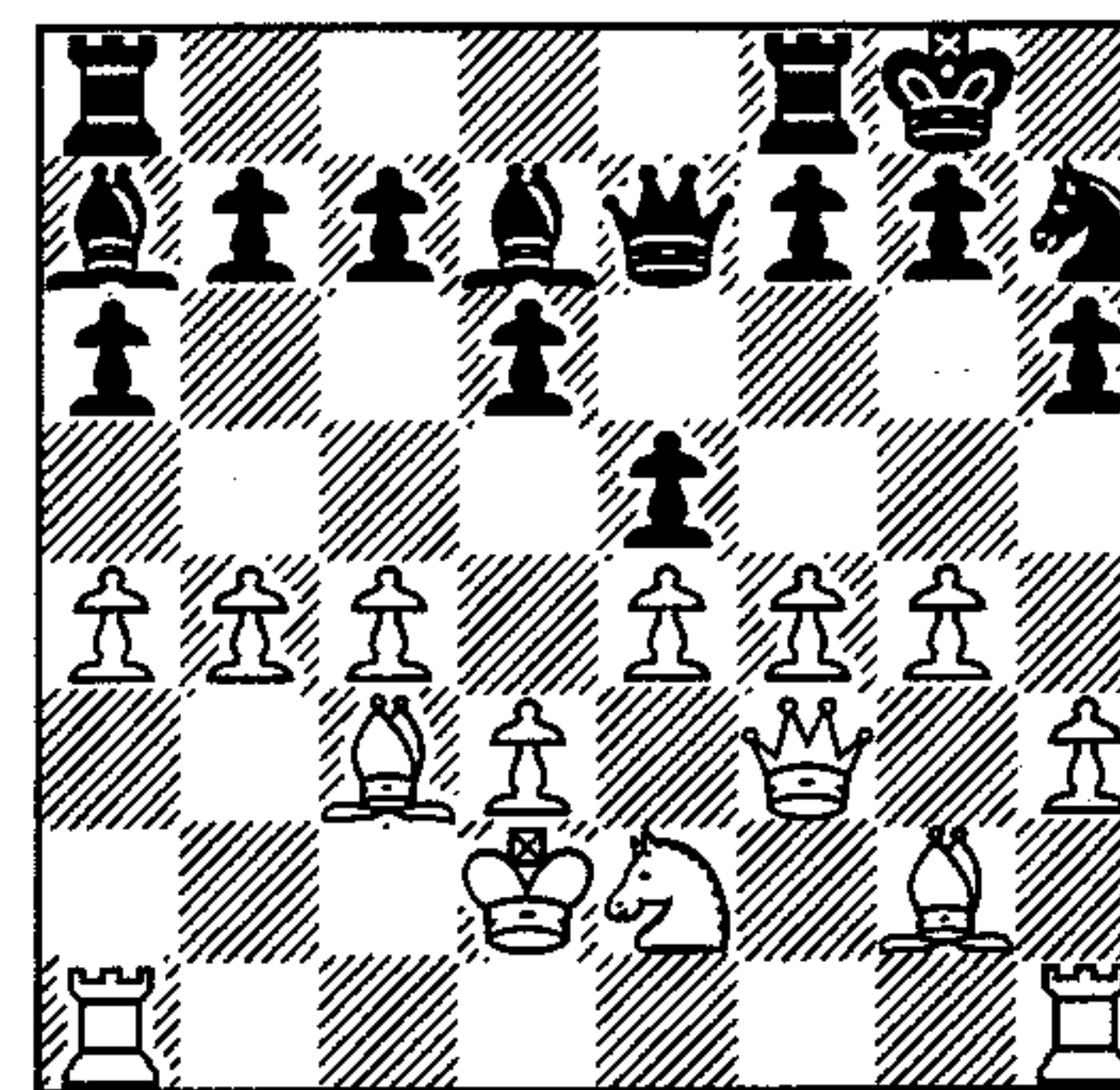
33 ♖xb7? ♗df3 would be a grim surprise.

33...b5! 34 ♖xf7 ♗c3 35 ♖f4+ ♖h8 36 ♖xd4 g5 37 ♖b7 bxc4 38 ♖xa6

38...a4! was necessary to keep the hopes of winning alive, but it seems that Black has good chances of survival after 38...a5.

38...♖xa3 39 ♖xc4 ♖f3 40 ♗d7 ♖f4 41 ♖d3 ♖g8 42 ♖g3 ♖f8 43 ♗d6 h5 44 ♗d7 ♖e8 45 ♖b5 ♖b4 46 ♗d5+ ♖e7 47 ♖e2 h4+ 48 ♖h3 ♖f6 49 ♗d3 ♖f5 50 ♖a3 ♗d4 51 ♖a8 ♖f4 52 ♖f8+ ♖e5 53 ♖f3 ♖b4 54 ♖a8 ♗d4 55 ♖a3 ♖f4 56 ♖h5 ♖e5 57 ♖g6 ♖f6 58 ♖h7 ♖f4 59 ♖e3 ♖g7 60 ♖d3 ♖f6 61 ♖a6 ♖g6 62 ♖e2 ½-½

Exercise 74: Black to move
Gulko-Karpov
Reykjavik 1991



Here I see the following: White has no control over the light squares on the queenside. White's king is uncomfortable and he therefore wants the centre to remain closed. White is preparing a pawn storm on the kingside but his minor pieces don't properly support this adventure, so it will take a long time to take off.

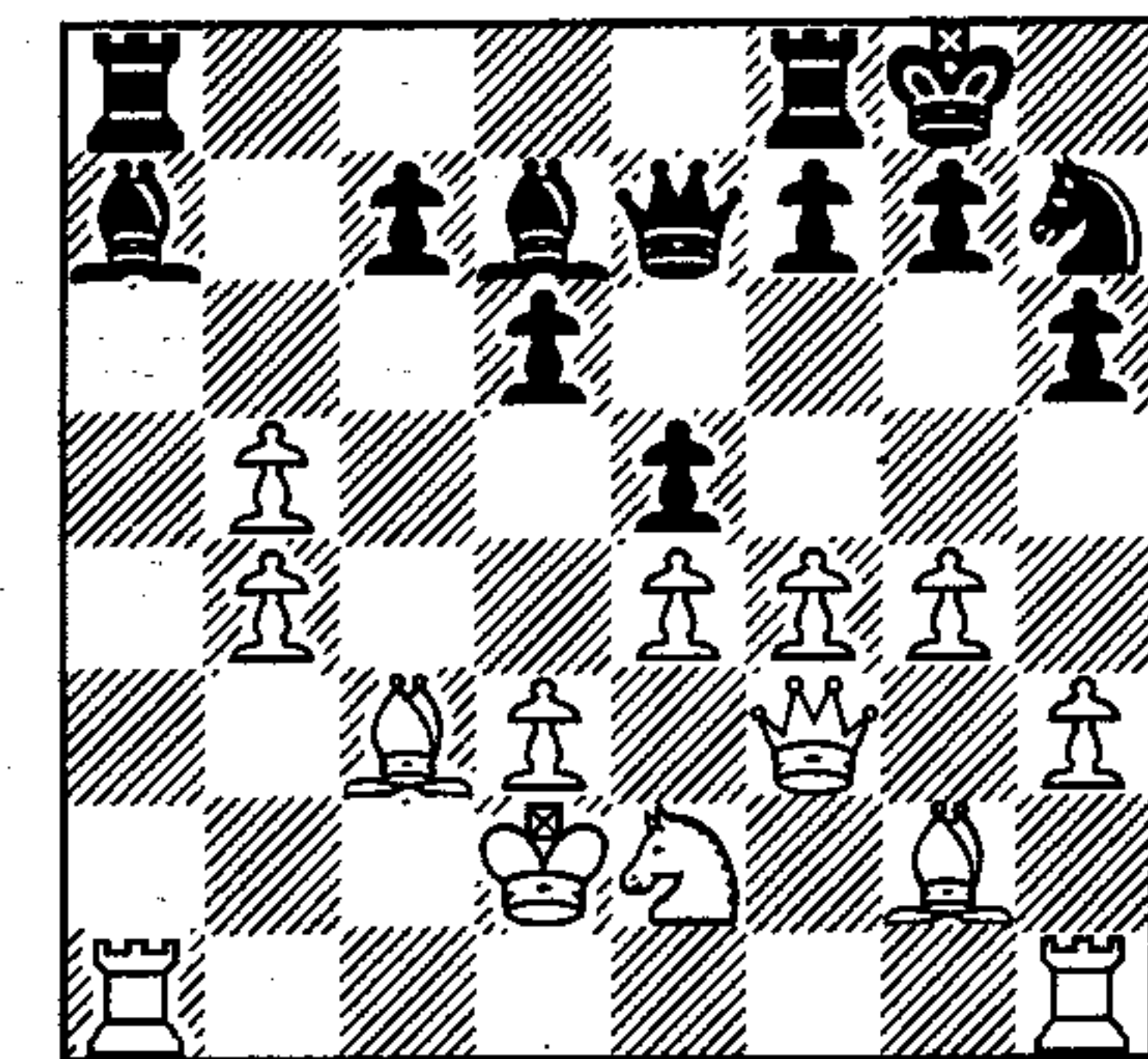
Black, on the other hand, wants vir-

tually the opposite of all this. Opening the game on both the queenside and in the centre is particularly important, activating his bishops without opening lines for the white bishops (therefore I discount ...d6-d5). All this leads directly to Karpov's choice in the game.

18...b5! 19 axb5

It is important to remember that after 19 cxb5 axb5 20 a5 c5! Black is opening even further. White's king and g2-bishop seem to be all dressed up with nowhere to go. Meanwhile the other bishop will also soon find that its position is compromised.

19...axb5 20 cxb5



20...♖b6!

This is the final finesse that your analysis requires. After 20...♖xb5 21 ♖a5! c6 22 ♖ha1 Black is tied down in a very uncomfortable way, and the white rooks are active.

21 ♖hd1 ♖xb5 22 ♖e1 ♖fe8

Black has a good position, and all of his pieces will eventually find good posts. Karpov suggests in his notes that 22...c6!? is also possible. This is most likely with the idea of ...d6-d5 at a given moment, but the move played in the game seems more clear-cut. Now the

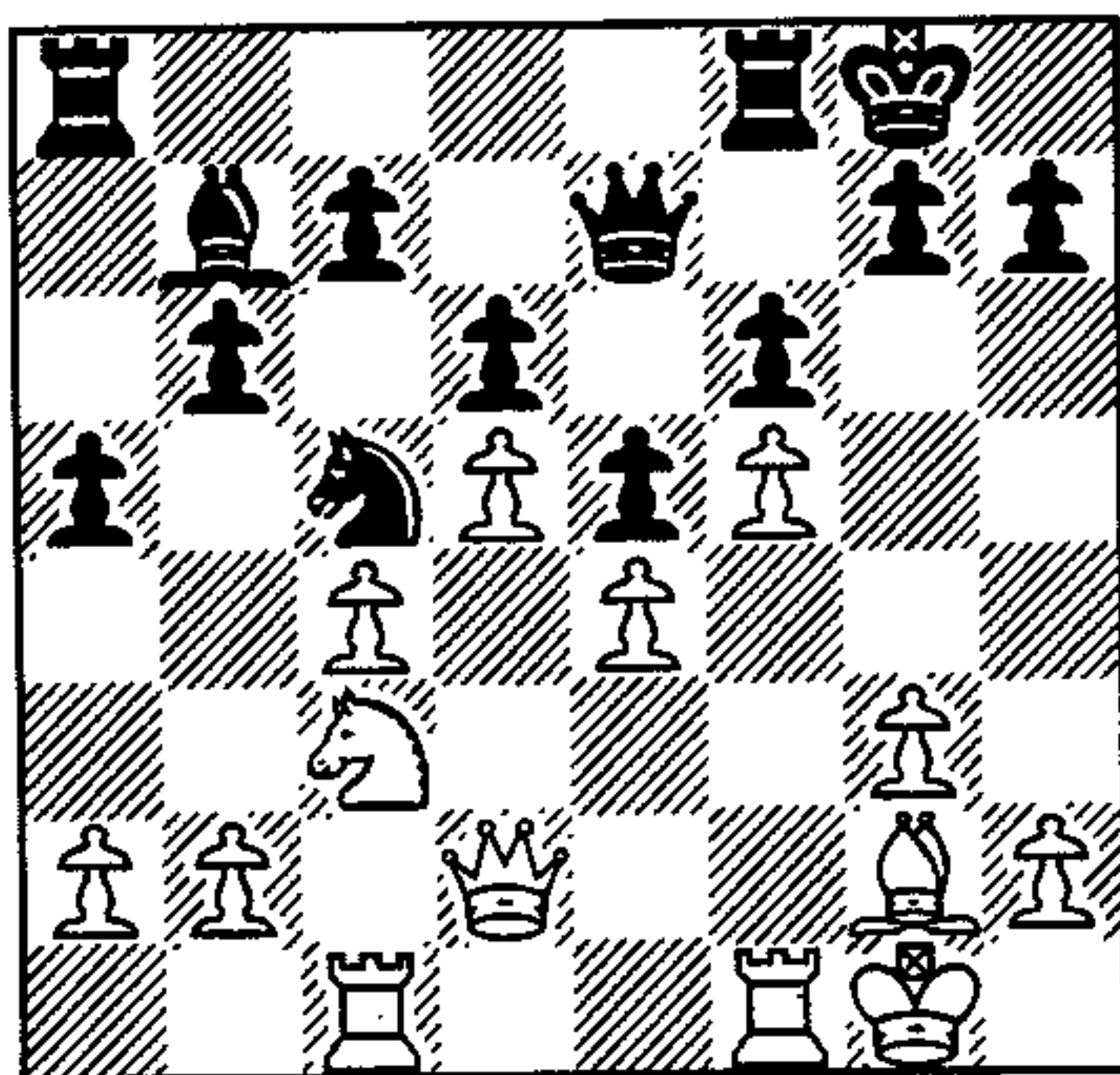
knight can return to the game via f8 and e6, as it should. This is much better than conceding control of the dark squares with ...exf4 at some point.

23 ♖xa8 ♖xa8 24 ♖a1 ♖d8! 25 ♖d2 c6 26 ♖c2 ♖f8! 27 ♖g3?!

White is forced to play 27 f5 in order to fight for survival.

27...♖e6! 28 ♖f5 ♖c7 29 fxe5 dxe5 30 ♖f1 c5 31 bxc5 ♖xc5 32 ♖b2 ♖f4?! 33 d4! exd4 34 ♖xd4 ♖xf1 35 ♖xf1 ♖c7 36 e5 ♖xd4 0-1

Exercise 75: White to move
Karpov-Salov
Reykjavik 1991



This is a classical example of the worst placed piece. Not surprisingly, however, there is more to it than that. White has two standard plans at his disposal, or so it seems. The first is advancing on the kingside with the pawns to induce weaknesses in the enemy camp. But most likely Black will stop this before it is even started with ...g7-g5, so there is really no need to start putting the pawns on light squares.

The other plan, which is more logical, is the slow advance of the queenside pawns, driving the knight away and

opening files. This cannot be started with a2-a3, not only in view of ...♖b3, but also ...a5-a4, fixing the pawns in an unfortunate way. There are therefore two equally good first moves. The question is in what order should they come. To have solved this exercise you need to have found the plan more than the execution.

18 ♖f3!
18 b3!, with the idea of ♖f3-d1, is equally good. It also prevents a possible ...a5-a4, although I don't feel that this is anything to prevent. After 18...g6 19 ♖h3 g5 20 ♖g4 there is really do difference with the game. White has a comfortable advantage.

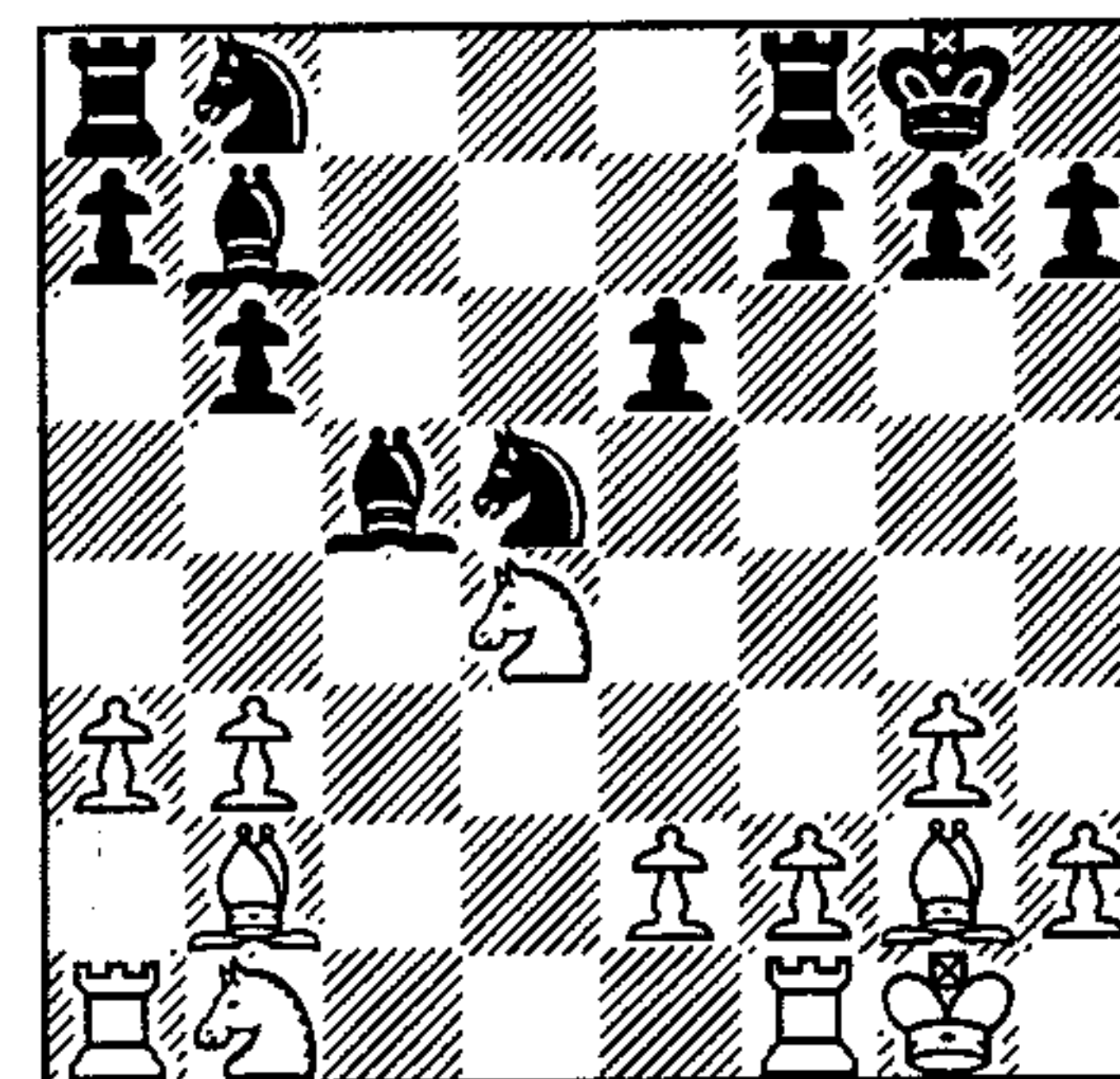
18...g5
18...g6 19 ♖g4 favours White.
19 b3 ♖c8 20 ♖d1!

Putting the bishop to use. Notice how all the pieces are playing, and how the bishop is in reach of both ways out of the pawn chain (a4 and h5).

20...♖d7 21 a3
White has the advantage.
21...♖a7 22 b4 ♖b7 23 ♖f2 ♖d8 24 ♖e3 axb4 25 axb4 ♖f7 26 h4 ♖h8!? 27 ♖f1! ♖g8 28 ♖cc2 ♖f8 29 ♖a2 ♖xa2 30 ♖xa2 gxh4 31 gxh4 ♖g7 32 ♖e1! ♖h6 33 ♖a7 ♖e8 34 ♖d2 ♖g2+ 35 ♖c1 ♖f7 36 ♖xc7 ♖g3 37 ♖d2 ♖h3 38 ♖b2 ♖g7! 39 ♖c8 39...♖d7 40 ♖c7 ♖e8 41 ♖e2! ♖xh4 42 c5 bxc5 43 bxc5 ♖f8 44 c6 ♖h2 45 ♖c8 ♖f2! 46 ♖b8 ♖c5 47 ♖c2 ♖g5 48 ♖b3 ♖g2 49 ♖b5 ♖a7 50 ♖d3 h5 51 ♖c4 ♖d4 52 ♖b3 ♖g3 53 ♖c2 ♖g2 54 ♖b3 ♖g3 55 ♖c2 ♖g2 56 ♖d3 ♖a7 57 ♖b7 ♖c5 58 ♖b5 ♖a7 59 ♖b7 ♖c5 60 ♖b3 h4 61 ♖c4

♖xc4+ 62 ♖xc4! ♖f3 63 ♖b5! ♖d4+ 64 ♖c4 h3 65 c7 ♖xb5 66 c8 ♖h2 67 ♖e6 1-0

Exercise 76: White to move
Karpov-Korchnoi
Biel 1992



Both players need to complete the development of their queenside, and the manner in which this is conducted is essential. Because White has the move he has the opportunity to win himself some territory in the centre and thereby limit the amount of space for the black pieces. For this reason exchanges are not desirable, as a principle. 15 ♖d2 is not a very good move because the knight is not going anywhere useful. But 15 b4 is okay, although Black is solid and has a reasonable position.

Karpov came up with a more surprising move, exploiting the weakness of the long diagonal.

15 ♖b5!
Now White can advance his pawns in the centre and gain space with tempo. The alternatives are less convincing. 15 ♖c3 is a tactical way of trying to make the move you want to play work, but it allows simplifications, and after the re-

ply 15...♖xd4 16 ♖xd5 ♖xf2+ 17 ♖xf2 ♖xd5 18 ♖xd5 exd5 19 ♖d1 ♖d8 20 e4 d4 21 ♖xd4 ♖xd4 22 ♖xd4 ♖c6 it does not appear to me that White has any advantage at all. The weaknesses of e4, b3 and c4 will fully make up for the advantage of bishop against knight.

15 b4 is, as I said, fine, but after 15...♖xd4 16 ♖xd4 ♖c6 17 ♖b2 ♖ac8 Black has developed with gain of time and is close to equality.

15...♖c6?!
Karpov does not put this down as a mistake but I believe that after this Black has no real chance of saving the game. After 15...♖c6? 16 ♖xd5 Black loses, but there seem to be saving chances after 15...a6, where the main idea, of course, is 16 ♖c7 ♖a7!, which is practically forced. I find it difficult to understand that Karpov considers only 16...♖xc7 17 ♖xb7, when Black will suffer needlessly from the power of the two bishops. Returning to 16...♖a7, after 17 ♖xd5 ♖xd5 18 ♖xd5 exd5 19 ♖d1 ♖d7 20 b4 ♖e7 21 ♖d2 White's advantage is more obvious than it is overwhelming. This is actually one of the principles of defence that I am working on. Very often one player has a simple line that leads to an advantage – as in the game – but the opponent can play some irregular moves and avoid it because the main objective of the defence tends to be to avoid forcing lines, as these will inevitably lead to pain and suffering.

16 b4!
Now the pawns start rolling, and Black is simply pushed back.

16...♖e7 17 e4 ♖f6 18 e5 ♖d5 19 ♖1c3! ♖xc3 20 ♖xc3

White's advantage is beyond doubt. Just compare the pieces.

20...♘d8!?

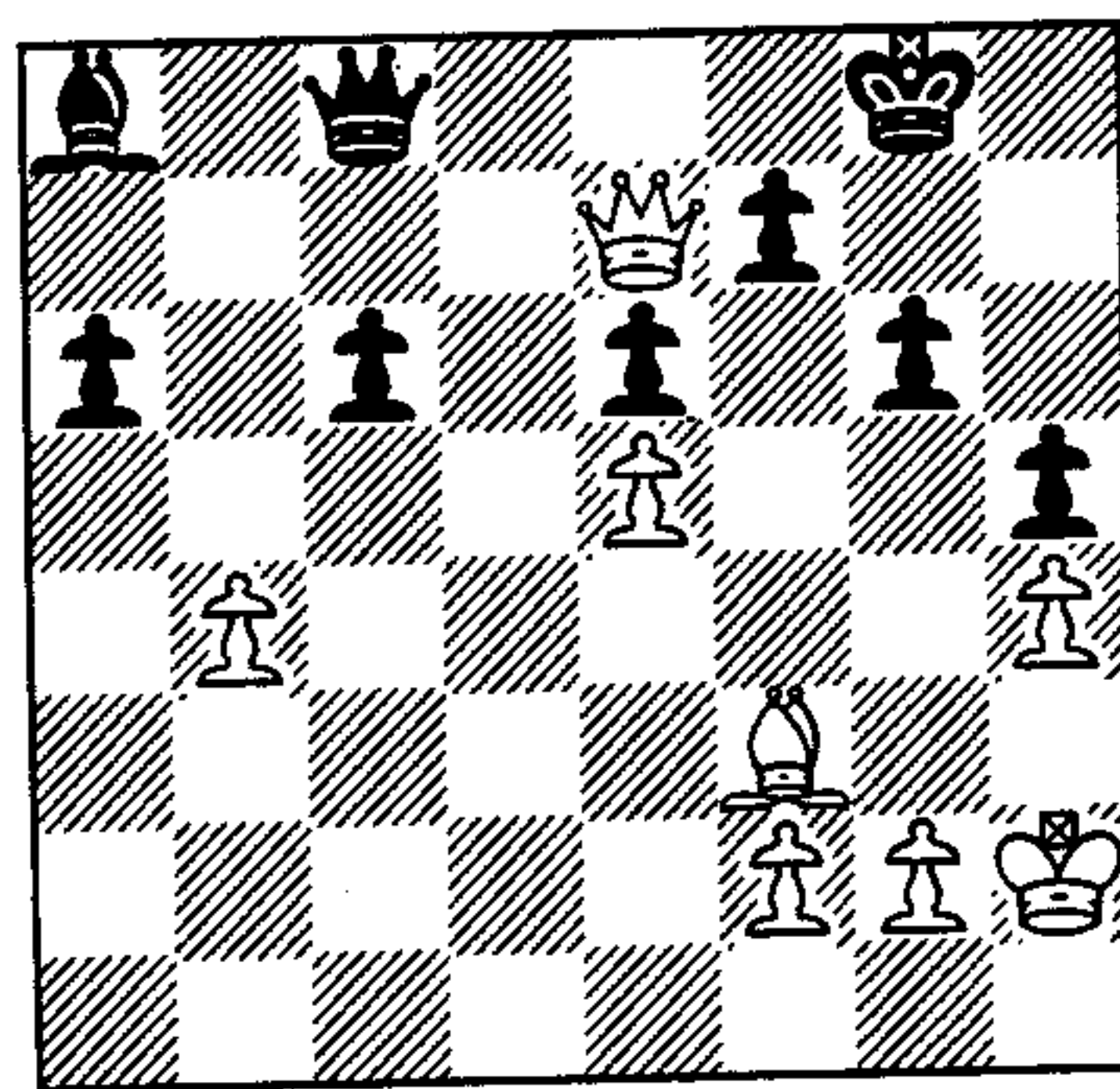
20...♞fd8 21 ♞fd1 a6 22 ♘d6 ♙xd6 23 exd6 ♞d7 24 ♞ac1 ♞ad8 25 ♙f6 gxf6 26 ♙xc6 ♙xc6 27 ♞xc6.

21 ♙xb7

21 ♞ac1!

21...♘xb7 22 ♞fd1 ♞fd8 23 ♞xd8+ ♙xd8 24 ♞d1 a6! 25 ♞d7 axb5 26 ♞xb7 ♘f8 27 ♙d4 ♞a6 28 h4! h5 29 ♘f1 ♙e8 30 ♙e2 ♘f8 31 ♞b8 ♙e8 32 ♞b7 ♘f8 33 ♘f1 ♙e8 34 ♘g2 ♘f8 35 ♞b8 ♙e7 36 ♞b7+ ♘f8 37 ♙e3 ♙e8 38 ♘f1 ♘f8 39 ♞b8 ♙e7 40 ♙g5+ f6 41 exf6+ gxf6 42 ♙xf6+ ♘xf6 43 ♞xd8 ♞xa3 44 ♞h8! ♞b3 45 ♞xh5 ♞xb4 46 ♘g2 ♘g6 47 ♞e5 ♘f6 48 f4 ♞b2+ 49 ♘f3 b4 50 ♞b5 b3 51 ♘g4! ♞b1 52 ♘h5 b2 53 g4 1-0

Exercise 77: White to move
Karpov-Lautier
Biel 1992



Quite a technical position. Black has an extra pawn but it is of little importance. Of greater significance is the pressure on the long diagonal, White's active forces and Black's passivity.

As White has no immediate way of breaking down the defences, and as Black has no ways of creating counterplay, White should find a way of strengthening his position quietly. And we know that this is done by improving the worst placed piece. Here it is the king. One might overlook this basic manoeuvre due to the queens still being on the board, but this would be a grave mistake. This is an endgame, a queen endgame. There might be some threats against the king but there is no reason to fear being mated.

31 ♘g3!

Simply improving the position. Moves like 31 ♙e2? don't work out well, if for no other reason than the break 31...c5! (probably not necessary) 32 bxc5 a5, which gives Black several ways of organising counterplay, e.g. 33 ♞a7 ♞d8! 34 ♘g1 ♙c6 and the advantage is in doubt, or 33...♞b7 34 ♞xb7 ♙xb7 35 ♙b5 ♘f8 and Black has, for instance, ...♙d5-b3; he should probably be able to draw this, although f7 is a little weak.

31...♞b7?

Leading to a lost endgame. Actually it is lost in a very ordinary way. White will simply create an extra weakness on the kingside. However, 31...♞b8 32 ♘f4 is also highly uncomfortable as Black has no way of improving his position while White will slowly but surely get closer and closer.

32 ♞xb7!

Karpov does not miss these chances.

32...♙xb7 33 ♘f4 ♘f8 34 ♘g5

One of my students suggested 34 ♙e3 ♙e7 35 ♘d4 ♘d7 36 ♙c5 ♙c7 37 ♙xh5!! gxf6 38 g4 and White wins.

This would be very nice if Black did not have the equally cunning 35...c5+! 36 ♙xc5 ♙xf3 37 gxf3 g5!, and it is Black who is winning.

34...♙e7 35 ♙e4 ♙a8 36 f3!

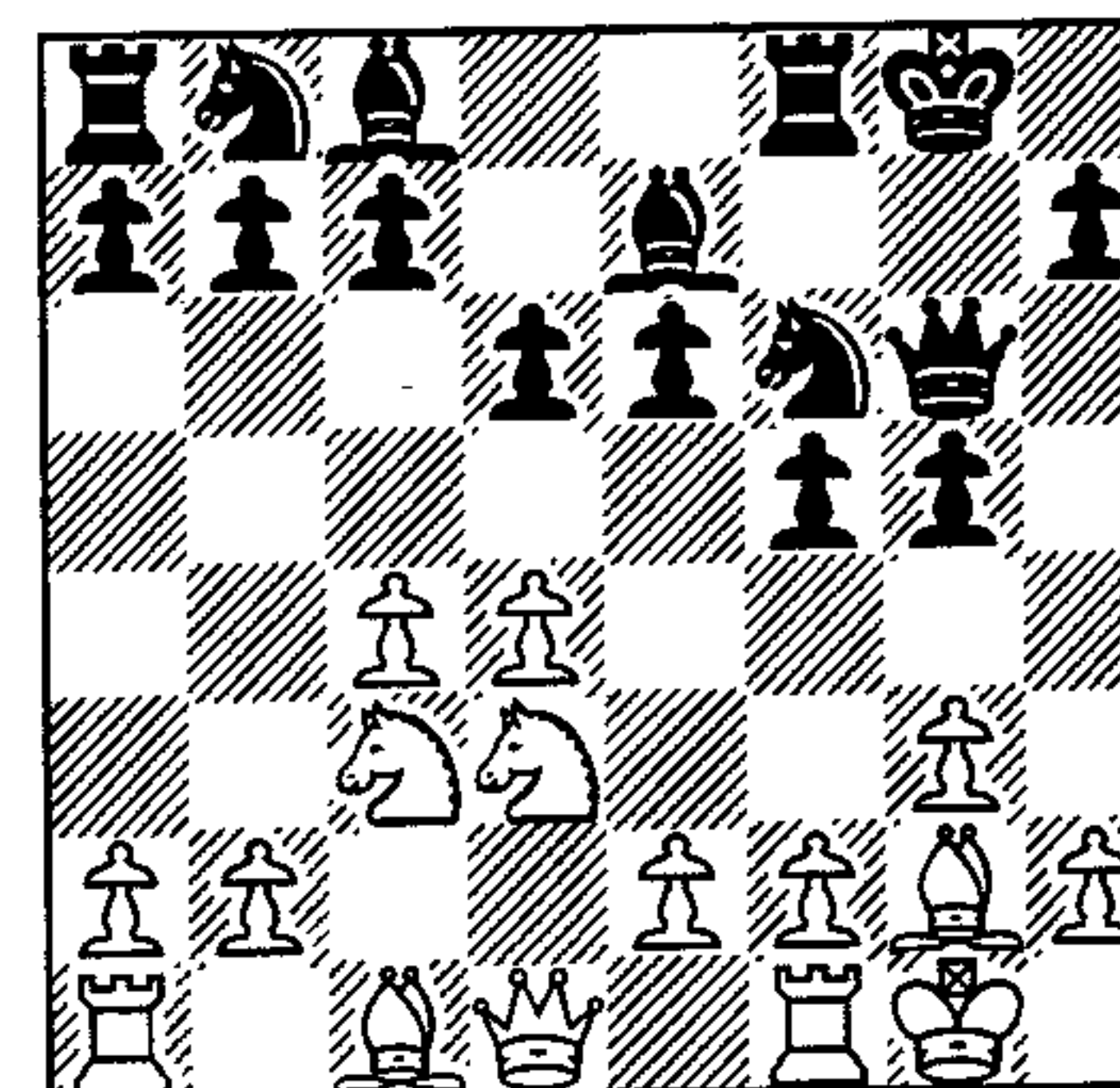
Like clockwork. After g2-g4 Black cannot prevent White from creating a passed pawn on the kingside.

36...♙b7

36...c5 37 ♙xa8 cxb4 38 ♙c6 b3 39 ♙a4 b2 40 ♙c2 is analysed by Karpov. White wins.

37 g4 ♙a8 38 gxf6 gxf6 39 f4 ♙b7 40 ♙f3 ♙a8 41 ♘h5 1-0

Exercise 78: White to move
Karpov-Short
Linares 1992



A classical strategic situation, not unlike a number of positions in the King's Indian Defence actually (I have added some examples below to illustrate). It is a race on both sides. White will advance on the queenside and Black on the kingside, and it is a simple matter of who will be first.

But then again, slowing down the opponent is an important ingredient of this kind of situation. One of the important aspects of this is limiting your

opponent's breathing space.

10 f4!

Very problematic for Black to meet. 10...g4 closes the kingside, after which White will be able to go to f2 with the king, should Black organise something on the kingside. Therefore Short swallows his pride and settles for a more passive strategy. This does not alter the situation much, though; Black is in trouble.

10 ♞b3!? is an interesting attempt to exploit the weakness on b7. Black cannot play 10...♙a6 because of the nice little combination 11 ♙xb7 ♞b8 12 ♙xc8! with an extra pawn, or a winning advantage for the queen. The right answer is 10...c6! (Black would be seriously worse after 10...♙c6?! 11 ♙b5! a6 12 ♙xc7 [12 ♙xc6 axb5 13 ♙xb5 wins a pawn, but the bishop is completely astray] 12...♙xd4 13 ♞d1 ♞b8 14 e3 ♙c6 15 ♙xa6 bxa6 16 ♙xc6 and I cannot see sufficient compensation here) 11 d5 e5! (11...cxd5 12 cxd5 e5 13 ♙xe5 is an important finesse, but Black is not forced to take on d5) 12 dxc6 (12 c5 ♘h8!) 12...♙xc6 13 ♙d5 ♙xd5 14 ♙xd5+ ♘h8 and Black has no serious worries. Actually White has made little or no progress on the queenside, while Black will soon start advancing.

10...h6 11 d5 ♙a6 12 b4! exd5 13 ♙xd5

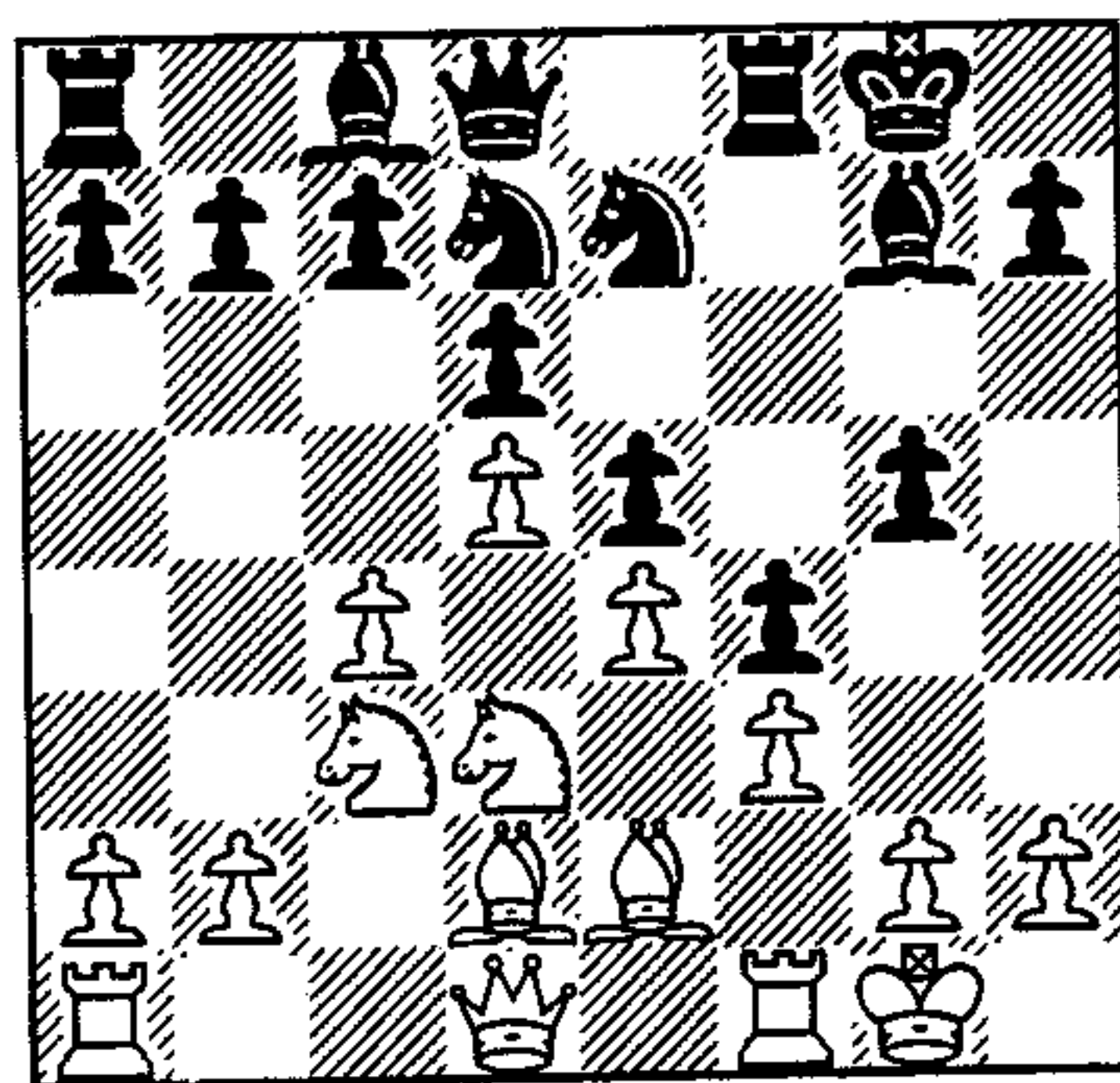
13 cxd5 also gives White a substantial advantage due to the pressure on the c-file, the extra space and the better coordination of the pieces (look at the poor fellow rotting away on a6). But I have noticed that Karpov loves playing technical positions where the pieces are the main actors, while he is less happy

with positions where the more strategic aspects of the positions are dominant. Here, of course, the great masters are Botvinnik and Korchnoi, but a player like Gelfand also springs to mind. My definition of strategy is play with pawn structures.

13...dxd5 14 exd5+ c6h7 15 b5! dxc5 16 dxc5 dxc5 17 c2 a6 18 a4! b8 19 fxg5! hxg5 20 a3 c6 21 g2 f6 22 e3! d4 23 exd4 cxd4 24 e3 dxe3 25 exe3 e6 26 g4! be8 27 bxc6 bxc6 28 c5! f6 29 exc6! b8 30 gxf5 f7 31 g2 b2 32 c3 xc3 33 exc3 d8 34 c6 dd2 35 e4 e2 36 c7 ex4 37 c8 1-0

Examples from the King's Indian Defence

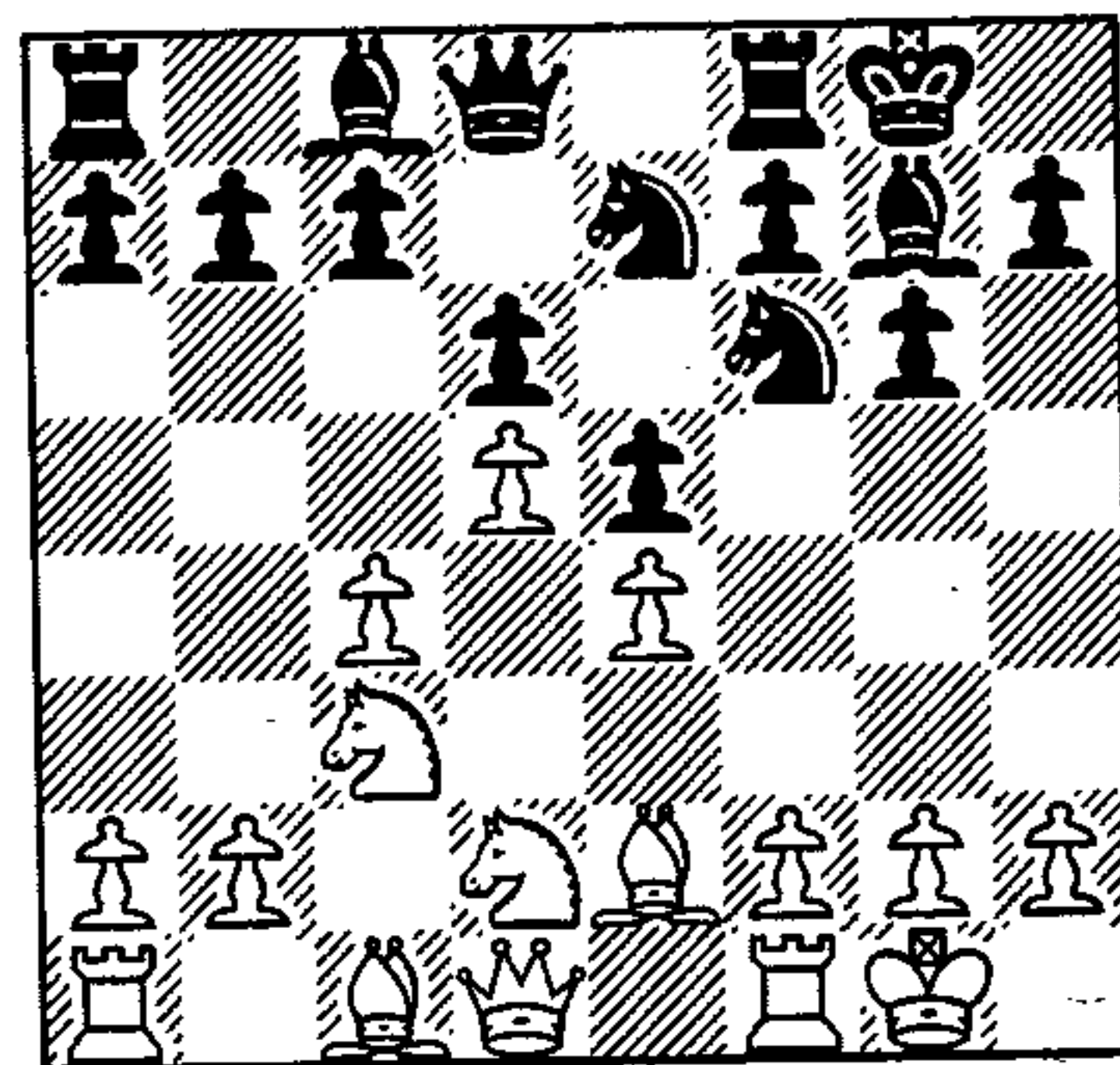
1 d4 f6 2 c4 g6 3 c3 g7 4 e4 d6 5 f3 0-0 6 e2 e5 7 0-0 c6 8 d5 e7 9 e1 d7 10 d3 f5 11 f3 f4 12 d2 g5



13 g4!?

And another one:

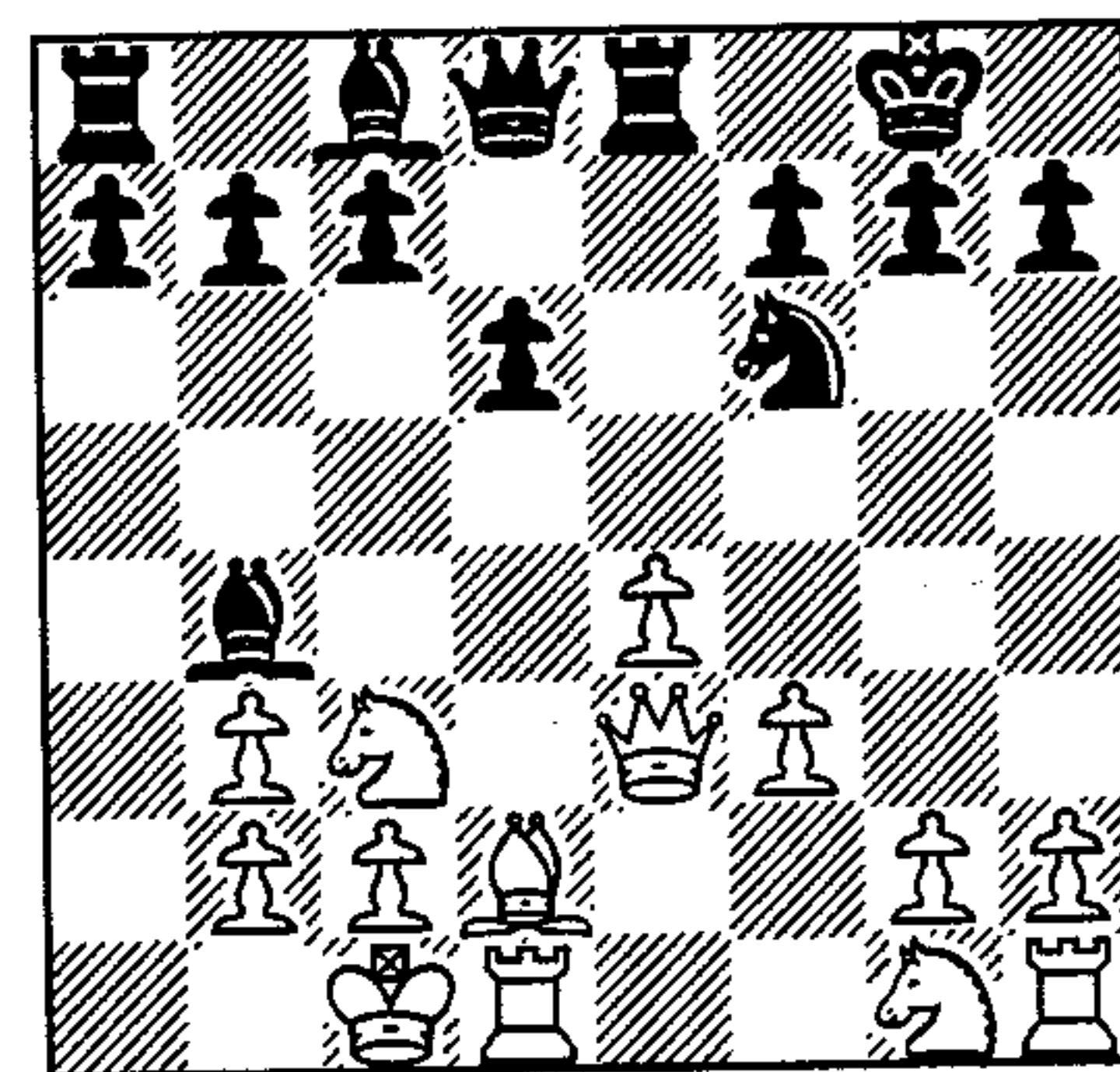
1 d4 f6 2 c4 g6 3 c3 g7 4 e4 d6 5 f3 0-0 6 e2 e5 7 0-0 c6 8 d5 e7 9 d2



9...a5 10 a3 c5!?

10...d7 is probably better but it is the idea that is important here.

Exercise 79: Black to move
Romero Holmes-Karpov
Madrid 1992



There are a few issues for Black to consider here. How to develop, for example. How to generate counterplay on the queenside to match the attack White will surely establish on the kingside in the not too distant future. And is it possible to use the pin on the e-file for anything?

Let us start with the last first. No, it is not. After 11...d5? 12 dxd5 dxd5 13 d3! White is on his way to winning a

pawn. Still, the idea could work if the bishop on b4 were not hanging. This is useful to remember.

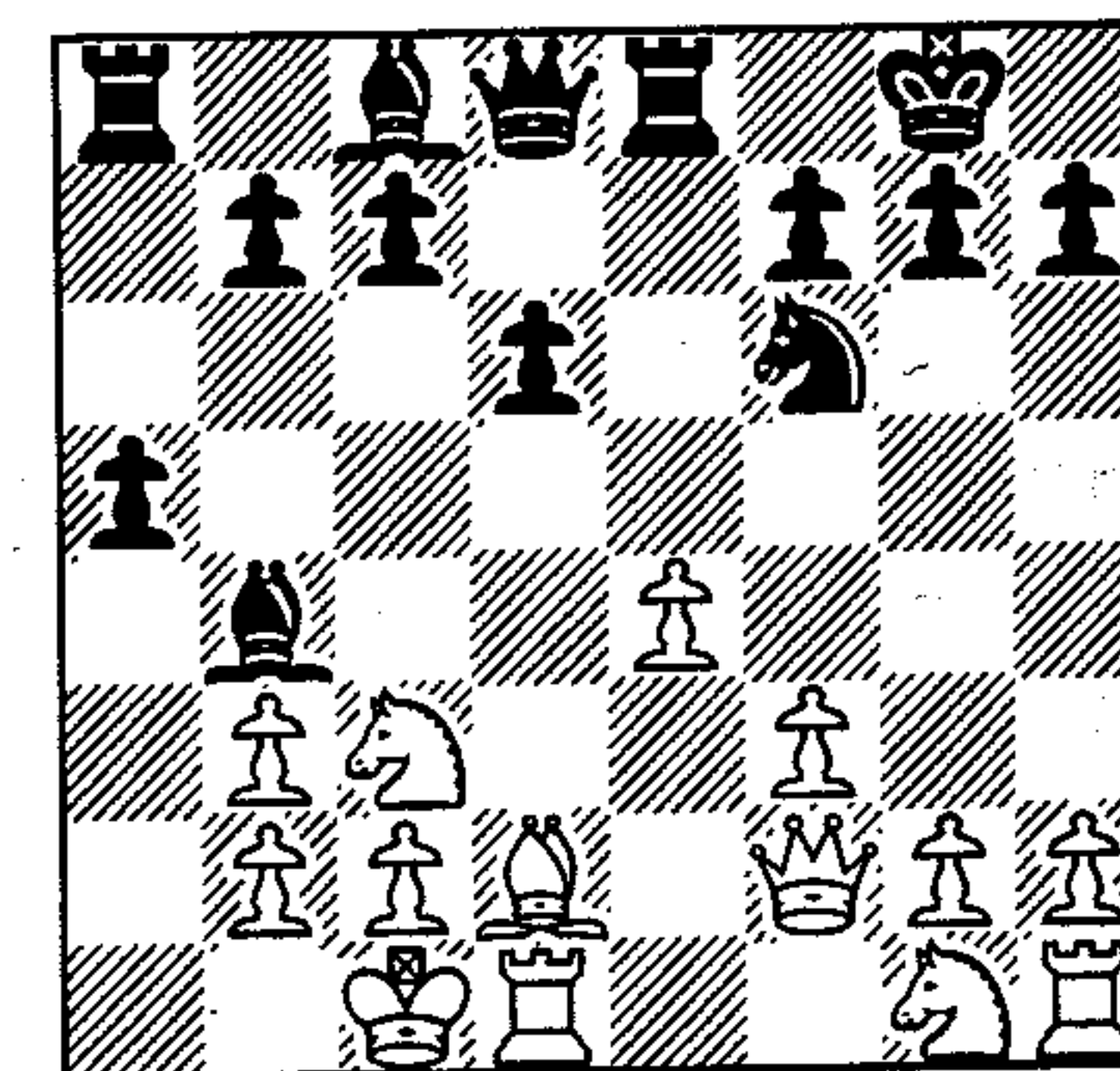
The second is also obvious. The weakness of White's king position is on the a-file, and a quick attack with the a-pawn, supported by the bishop from d7, would quickly open files on the queenside. The second and the third answer the first question. The bishop belongs on d7 and the a-pawn is to be pushed forward, and the need to protect the bishop on b4 decides the order of moves.

11...a5!

The best kind of move to play. As explained, 11...a5 is both prophylactic and aggressive. White now (unwisely) decided to lose more time.

12 f2

After 12 f2 d5 Black's prospects are certainly preferable but White needed to develop and fight in some way.



12...d7! 13 dge2

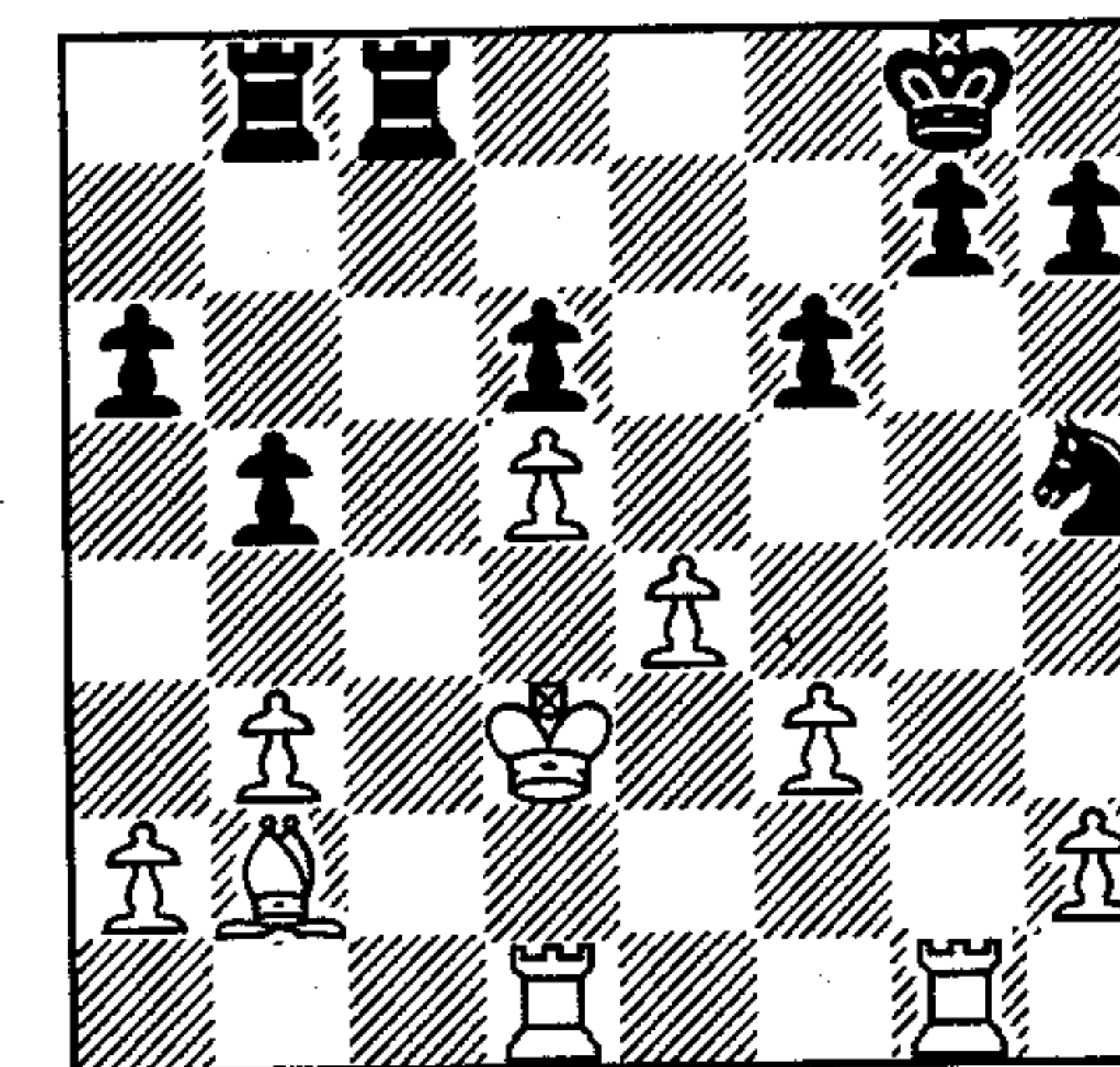
Development is necessary. Karpov also gives 13 h4 a4 14 g5 a3! (with the threat of ...a3-a2!) 15 dge2 a2 16 d2 a5 with the better chances for Black.

13...a4 14 bxa4 xa4

Black is obviously first. White is in big trouble.

15 b1!? c5!? 16 e3 b6 17 d4 d7 18 g4 a5 19 f4 c6 20 hg1 d7 21 h5 g6! 22 d2? xd4 23 xd4 gxh5 24 gxh5+ f8 25 g7+ e7 26 g5 a8 27 b4 xg5 28 xg5+ f6 29 g7+ d8 30 xh7 a2 31 h6 c8 32 f4 h8 33 h6 g8! 34 d3 g5 0-1

Exercise 80: White to move
Karpov-Illescas Cordoba
Dos Hermanas 1994



White has the advantage but there is still the matter of how to exploit it. Well, in an endgame it is often a good idea to create as many weaknesses as possible in the enemy camp. It is also good to think about the future of all the pieces. Here this led Karpov to lose time.

25 a3!!

The alternative is something like 25 c1 f7 26 c6 xc6 27 dxc6 c8 28 c1 e6 and Black will be all right. He will round up the c-pawn but probably be forced to make some concessions on the way. Karpov says it is equal, which

is probably not too far off.

So why is 25 ♖a3 so obvious? Well, first of all it forces Black to put his pawn on a more exposed square, and that is a dark square! Secondly, it opens a path for the white king to travel to the queenside, where it can become an important player. Thirdly it introduces the possibility of ♖c1-c4 later to attack the b-pawn, which is what happened in the game.

25...b4

Black cannot live with 25...♖d8 26 ♖c1! followed by ♖c6.

26 ♖b2 ♖f7 27 ♖c1 ♖f4+ 28 ♖e3 g5

Karpov gives the following convincing variation as a possible outcome of major exchanges: 28...♖h3 29 ♖xc8 ♖xc8 30 ♖c1 ♖xc1 31 ♖xc1, with the idea of 32 ♖d2, and the pawns on the queenside will be eternally weak (and on dark squares).

29 ♖d4!

A simple move, improving the worst placed piece.

29...♖e7 30 ♖c6!

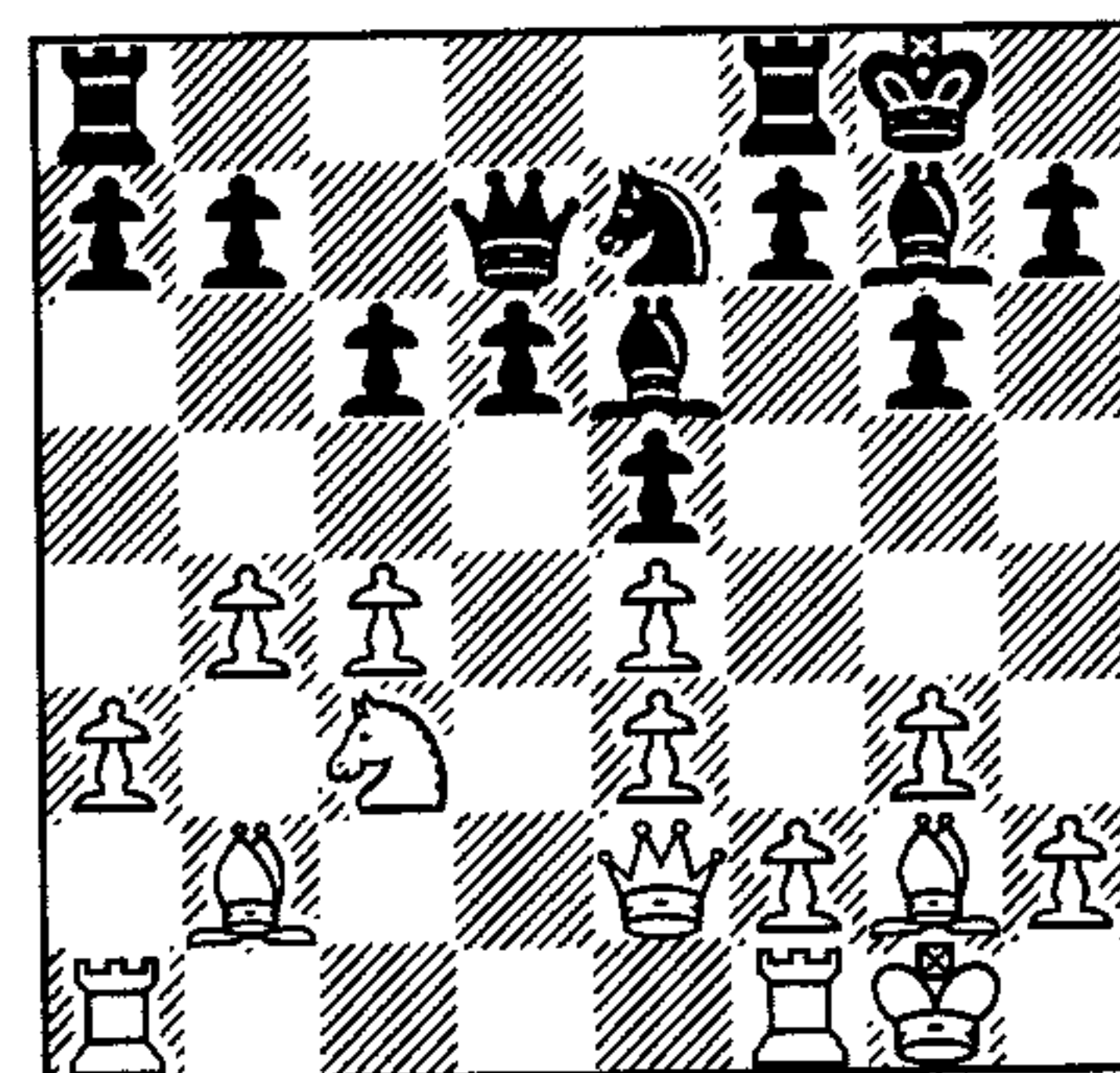
After this Black is forced to allow White a passed pawn.

30...♖xc6 31 dxc6. ♖c8 32 ♖c1 ♖e6 33 ♖b6!

White does not give away the advantage of bishop over knight. After 33 ♖c4? ♖c5! 34 ♖xc5 dxc5 35 ♖xc5 ♖d6 36 ♖f5 (the pawn ending after 36 ♖d4 would win if the white pawn stood on h3 instead of h2; now Black is cruising after 36...♖xc6 37 ♖xc6+ ♖xc6 38 e5 f5! 39 e6 ♖d6 40 e7 ♖xe7 41 ♖e5 f4 42 ♖f5 h6 and White loses in view of 43 ♖g6 g4!) 36...♖e6 Black will be able to hold the endgame.

33...♖c5 34 c7 ♖e6 35 ♖c4 ♖d7 36 ♖xb4 ♖xc7 37 ♖c4! ♖e8 38 ♖xc8 ♖xc8 39 ♖d4 ♖b7 40 ♖a5 ♖c6 41 ♖c4! ♖d7 42 ♖c3! h5 43 a4 ♖e6 44 ♖d4 f5 45 exf5+ ♖xf5 46 ♖d5! ♖f4 47 b4 ♖xf3 48 ♖c6! g4 49 b5 axb5 50 a5! ♖e4 51 a6 1-0

Exercise 81: Black to move
Morovic-Karpov
Dos Hermanas 1994



It is always important to be able to spot the weakest point in the opponent's position. Here it must be c4 as only the queen offers protection, which is hardly convenient for White. In fact White has just played 15 dxe4?, when 15 ♖xe4 would have been level. Not surprisingly Karpov succeeds in exploiting the weakness of c4.

15...♖c8!

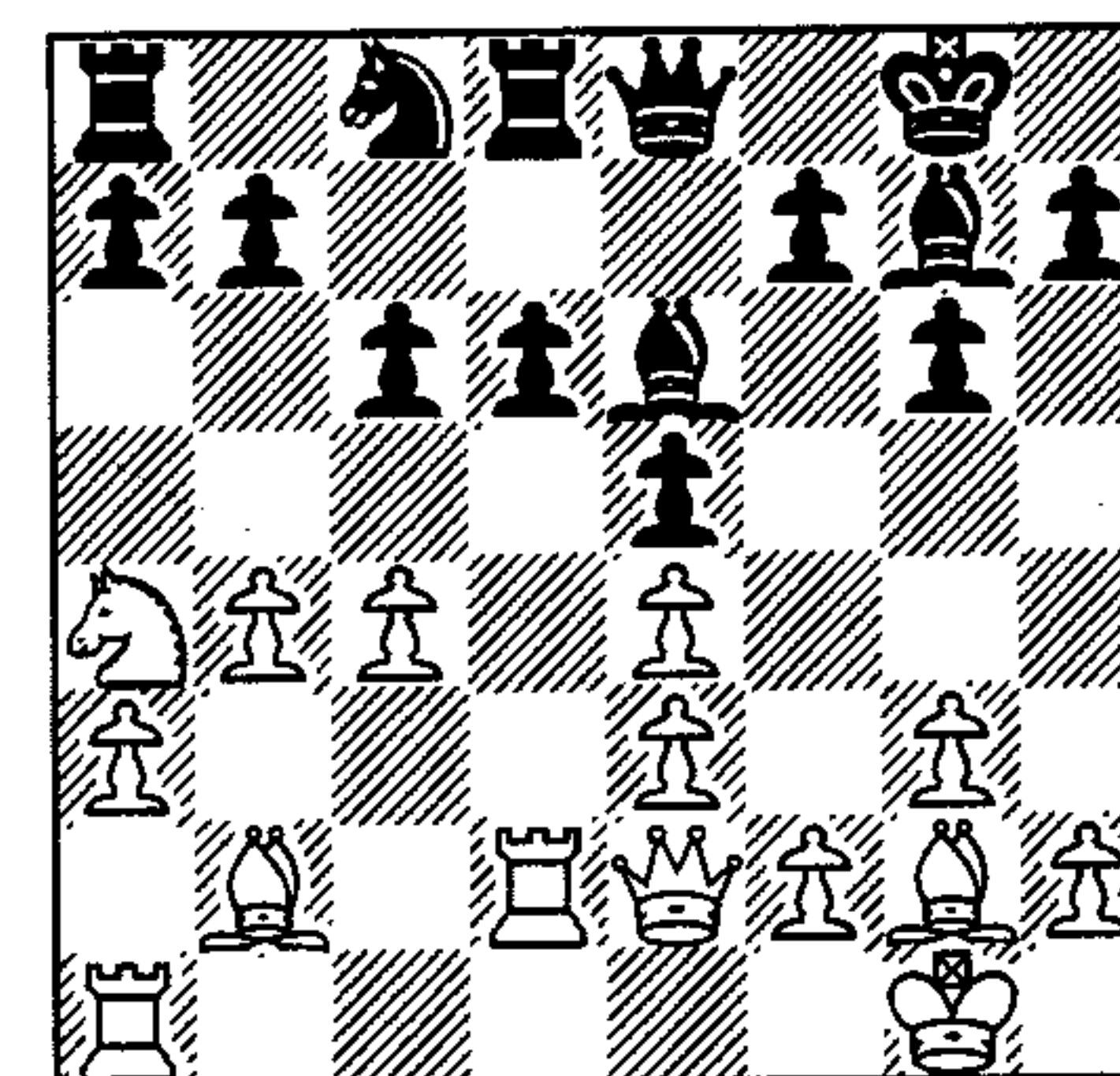
There are some questions that need to be answered before this move is picked out. First, which is Black's worst placed piece? The knight, obviously. It has no future on e7 and needs to find a better square. The c4-square, which is already in our sights, is the premium choice! But what about the rooks –

which one should go to d8? Well, at the moment White has this enormous chunk of pawns in the middle, and there is no reason to rush to exchange them with ...f7-f5. Meanwhile the queen's rook might be able to prove itself useful where it is, so the decision is rather easy to make.

16 ♖fd1 ♖d8 17 ♖a4

Preventing ...♖b6. After something like 17 ♖d2 ♖b6 18 c5 ♖c4 19 ♖d3 ♖e7 Black would have profited 100% from his strategic choices and would be ready to find a new plan for improving his position.

17...♖e8 18 ♖d2



18...a6!

Black does not want to lose control over d5 in order to control c4 – hence this preparatory move. Instead 18...b5? 19 cxb5 cxb5 20 ♖c3 ♖c4 21 ♖d1 would not be bad for White.

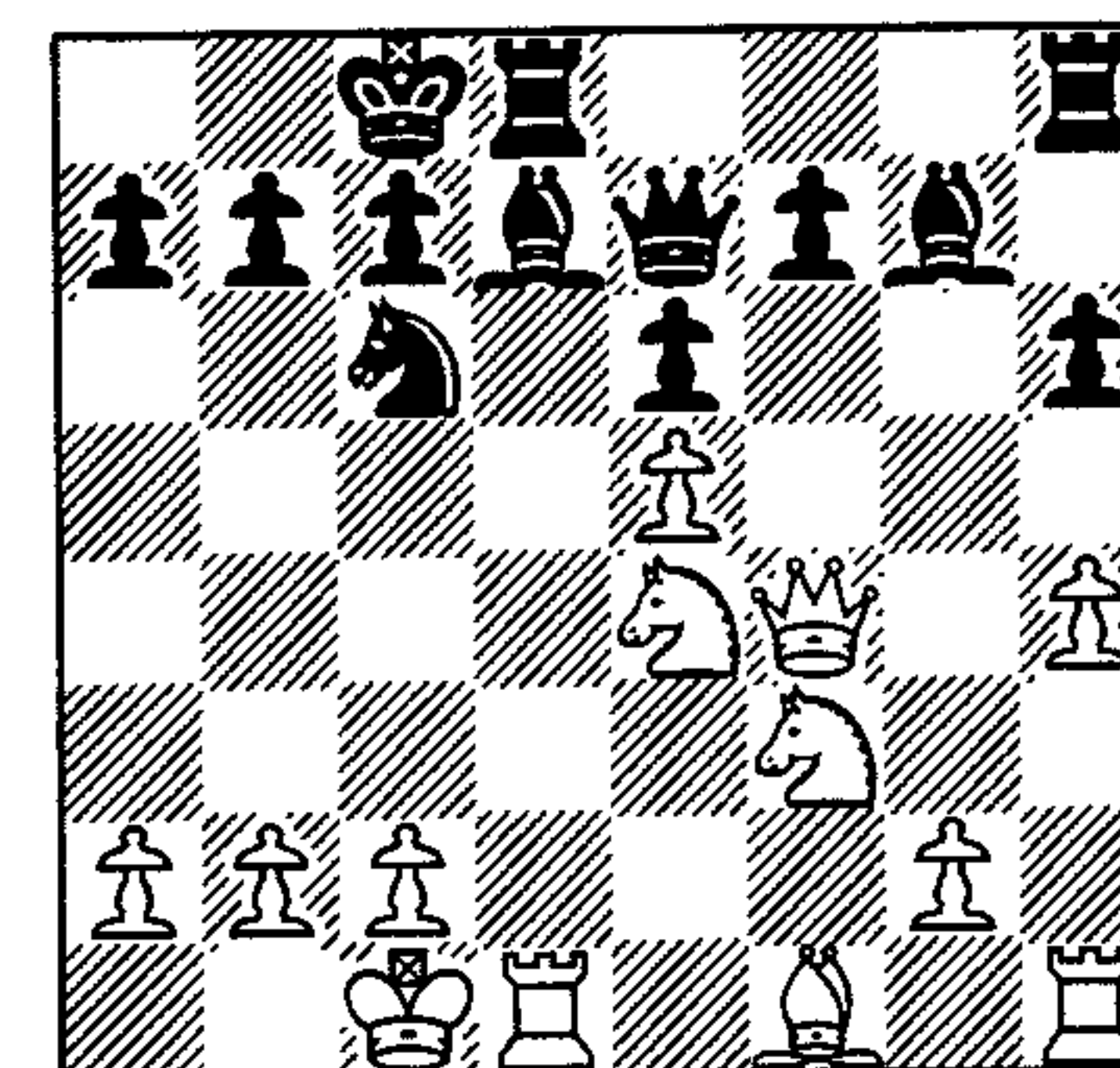
19 ♖c3 b5 20 ♖b2 ♖b6 21 cxb5 axb5

Black has a strong position. White has poor co-ordination among his minor pieces and some serious weaknesses. Now Black opened up the position to his advantage.

22 ♖d1 d5 23 a4 ♖c4! 24 ♖xc4

dxc4 25 a5 ♖f8 26 a6 f6 27 f4 c5 28 ♖xd8 ♖xd8 29 ♖e1 ♖b6 30 fxe5 fxe5 31 ♖xe5 ♖xa6 32 ♖d1 ♖g4?! 33 ♖b1 ♖e6 34 ♖c3 ♖a2! 35 bxc5 ♖xc5 36 ♖d4 ♖xg2+! 37 ♖xg2 ♖xe4+ 38 ♖g1 0-1

Exercise 82: Black to move
Adams-Karpov
Las Palmas 1994



Subject: Ideal squares and improvement of the worst placed piece. The most problematic piece to bring into play is the d7-bishop, and something awkward like ...♖b8, ...♖c8 and ...b7-b6 is both slow and easily preventable (♖b5 at the right moment, for example).

The ideal square for this bishop is, unfortunately, already occupied, so the right plan is a rearrangement of the pieces.

14...♖b8!!

This is the logical solution, although not completely natural. The knight needs to move and d7 is the best available square, so in this way the bishop and knight simply switch places. 14...♖b4? is logical too, in order to go to d5, but after 15 ♖d6+! cxd6 16 ♖xb4

Black is in trouble.

15 ♖f6

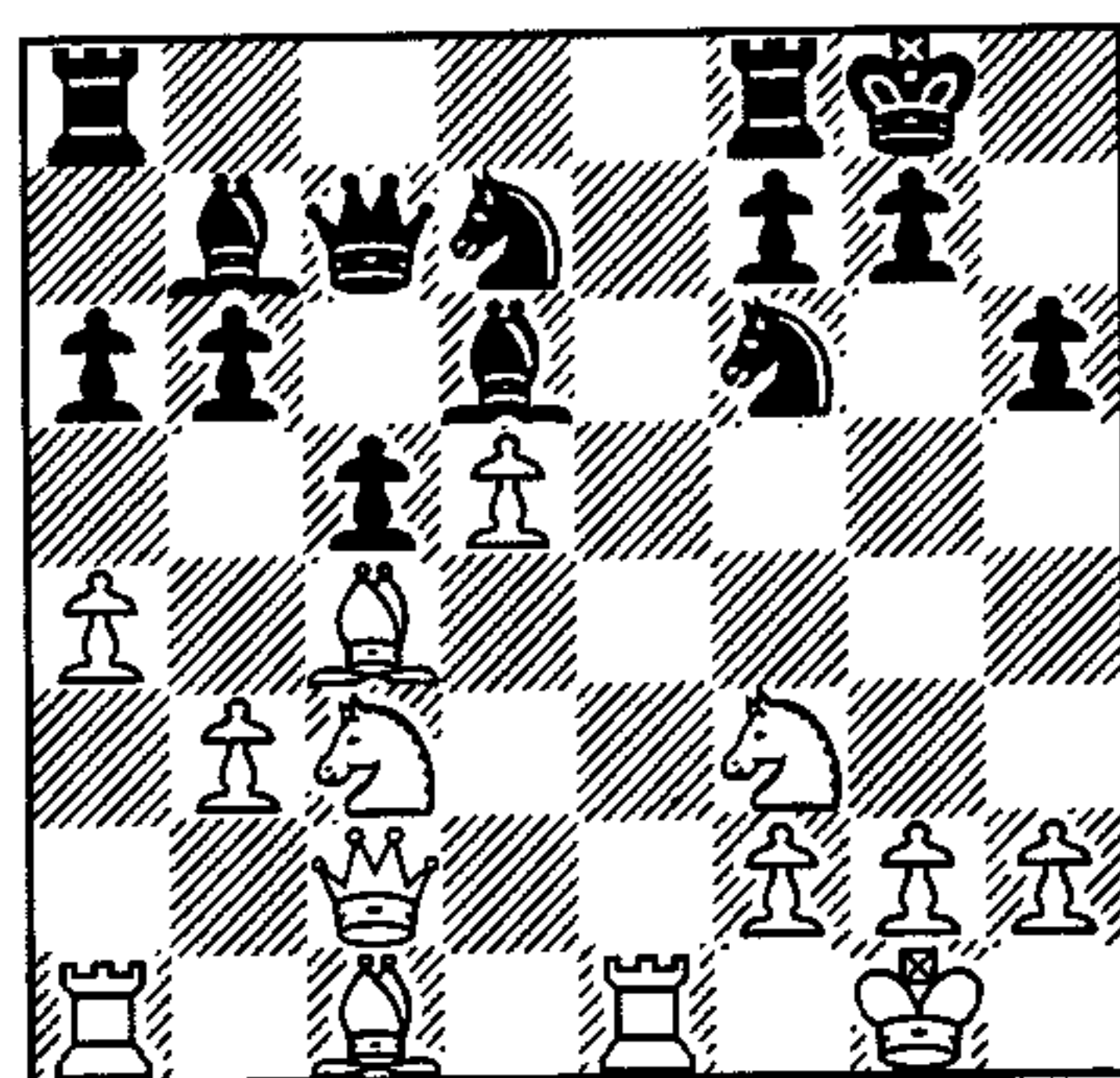
15 ♘d4 ♙c6 16 ♘f6 ♚c5 is difficult for White.

15...♙c6 16 ♙e2 ♘d7! 17 ♘h5

17 ♘d7 was probably better as the knight is now lost on the edge, but Black is already doing better.

17...♙xf3 18 ♙xf3 ♙xe5 19 ♚e4 c6 20 ♜xd7 ♙xb2+! 21 ♚xb2 ♜xd7 22 ♚e3 ♜hd8 23 a3 ♜d4 24 g3 ♚c5 25 ♜e1 ♜c4! 26 ♚xc5 ♜xc5 27 ♜e2 ♜d1! 28 ♘f4 ♜b5+ 29 ♚a2 ♜bb1 30 ♙h5 ♜a1+ 31 ♚b3 ♜db1+ 32 ♚c4 ♜xa3 33 ♙xf7 ♜xg3 34 ♙xe6+ ♚c7 35 ♘d3 a5 36 ♜f2 ♜e3! 37 ♜f7+ ♚b8! 38 ♜e7 ♜e4+ 39 ♚c3 ♜b5 0-1

Exercise 83: White to move
Lautier-Karpov
Groningen 1995



This is a case of pure prophylaxis. Black wants to play ...♘e5 and exchange a misplaced knight. In cases like this, with White having a space advantage, it is quite natural for him to avoid exchanges.

Another thing is weaknesses. In this position the weakest point in Black's

position is f5, while White's is h2. Another simple observation: the ideal square for the f3-knight is f5. So the first move can be selected – as always – based on the sum of the most important observations (of course it is difficult to know what are the most important observations!).

15 h3!

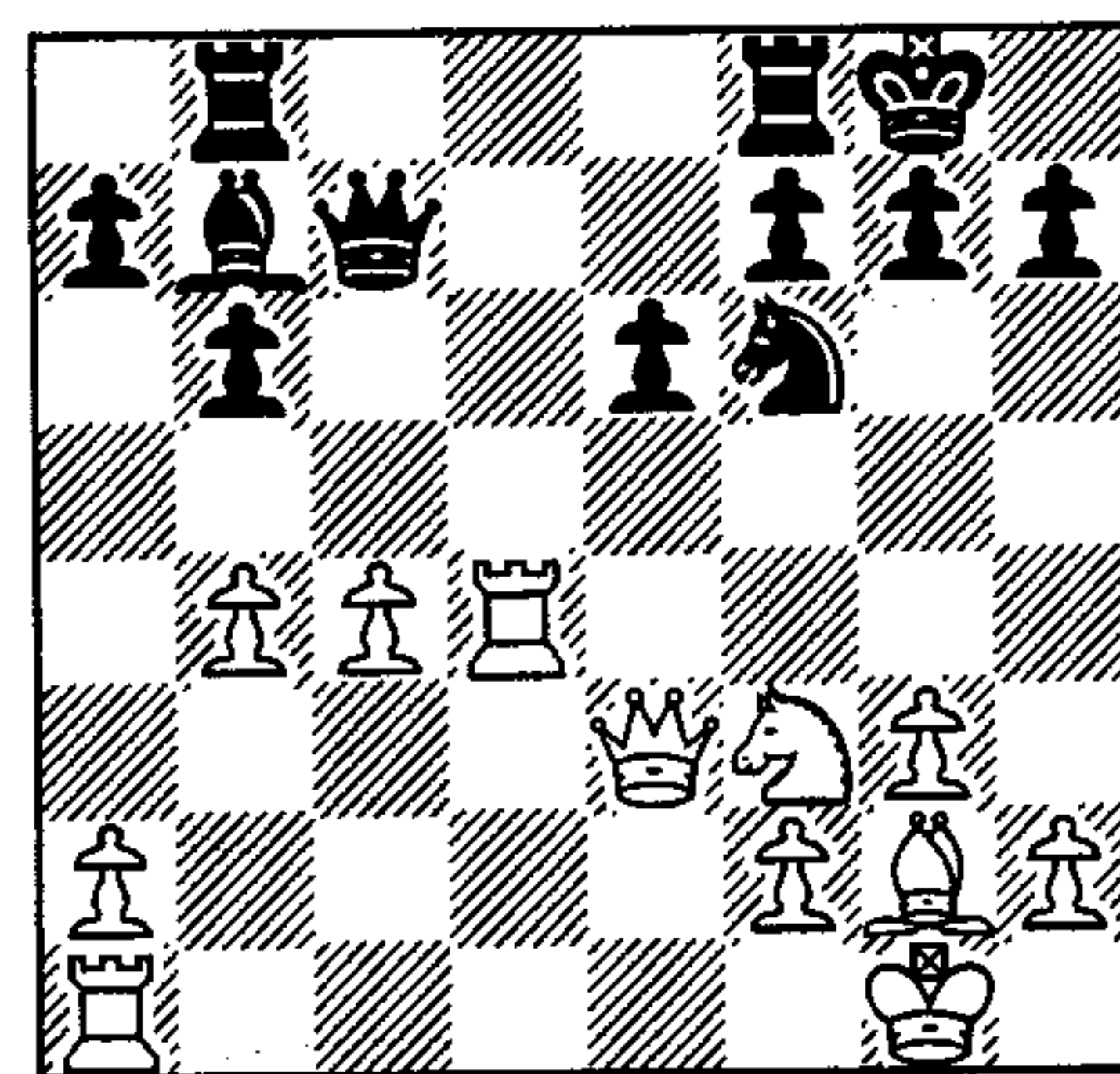
Simple chess. Now everything has been achieved. 15 ♙b2?! ♘e5! 16 ♘xe5 ♙xe5 17 h3 ♜fe8 would give Black equality.

15...♘e5 16 ♘h4 ♜fe8 17 ♙b2 ♚d7 18 ♜e2

White is slightly better.

18...♜ad8 19 ♜ae1 ♘xc4 20 bxc4 ♙c8 21 ♘d1 ♜xe2 22 ♜xe2 ♘h5 23 ♜e4! ♜e8 24 ♘e3 ♜xe4 25 ♚xe4 ♚e7 26 ♚xe7 ♙xe7 27 ♘hf5 ♙f8 28 g4 ♘f4 29 ♙e5 ♘xh3+ 30 ♚g2 ♘g5 31 ♙c7 ♙d7 32 ♙xb6 ♙xa4 33 d6 ♘e4 34 ♘e7+ ♙xe7 35 dxe7 f6 36 f3 ♘d6 37 ♙xc5 ♘e8 38 ♘f5 ½-½

Exercise 84: White to move
Karpov-Serper
Dortmund 1993



This position holds one major ques-

tion for White. Should he play ♘e5 directly or does he want to exchange queens first? Well, the b7-bishop is perfect on the long diagonal and White really has no alternative but to eliminate it. Moreover White is happy to do so despite the location of his own bishop, as the c6-square is the potentially weakest link in Black's position.

White's advantages all support an exchange of queens – a distant passed pawn, the weakness of c6 and the domination of the d-file.

19 ♚e5!

19 ♘e5 ♙xg2 20 ♚xg2 ♜fd8 21 ♜ad1 h6 is also better for White, but the with the queens still on Black can create counterplay against the king, something which is impossible after the text.

19...♚e7!

The endgame after 19...♚e7 20 ♘xe5 ♙xg2 21 ♚xg2 offers Black no prospects of counterplay, with White having the superior forces and a passed pawn.

20 a3 ♜bc8 21 ♜ad1 ♜c7

More natural is 21...♜fd8 22 ♜xd8+ ♜xd8 23 ♜xd8+ ♚xd8 24 ♘d4 when White is only slightly better.

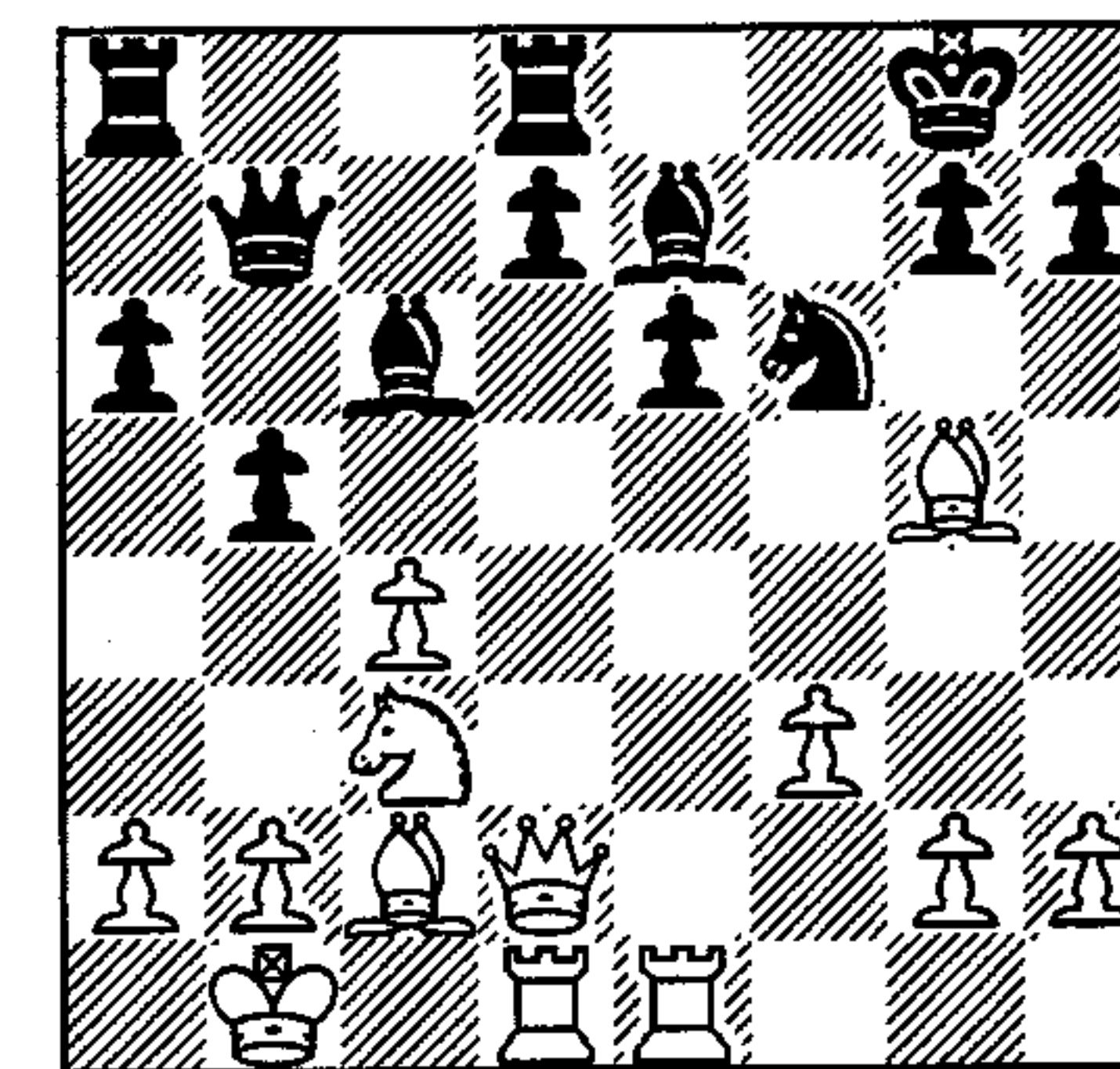
22 ♘h4 ♜fc8?

22...♙xg2 23 ♘xg2 ♜fc8 24 ♘e3 is correct, with an edge for White, but now White has a practically winning combination.

23 ♘f5!! exf5 24 ♚xe7 ♜xe7 25 ♙xb7 ♜f8 26 ♙a6! g6 27 c5 bxc5 28 bxc5 ♜c7 29 ♜c1 ♜e8 30 c6! ♚g7 31 ♚f1 ♜e5 32 ♙b7 ♜a5 33 ♜cd1! ♜e5 34 ♜d7! ♜e7 35 ♜xc7 ♜xc7 36 ♜d8 ♜e7 37 f3 g5 38 ♜a8 g4 39 fxg4 fxg4 40 ♜xa7 ♘d5 41 ♜a4 ♘e3+ 42 ♚g1 ♚f6 43 ♜f4+

1-0

Exercise 85: White to move
Karpov-Adams
Dos Hermanas 1993



Whenever we see an unprotected piece we must keep our eyes peeled because this is one of the most important ingredients of a combination. Here White has a very tempting move that should be seriously considered before the more prudent alternatives and, since it resulted in a close to winning advantage, Karpov executed it.

21 ♘d5!

A simple launch, but very logical. White's pieces are ideally placed – unlike Black – so the fact that decisive action is in the air is not surprising.

21...♙xd5

Forced. 21...♘d5? 22 cxd5 ♙xg5 23 dxc6 ♙xd2 24 cxb7 is obvious. The same goes for 21...exd5 22 ♜xe7 bxc4 23 ♙xf6 gxf6 24 ♚h6, or something along those lines.

22 cxd5!

22 ♙xf6 ♙xf6 23 cxd5 looks better for White but there is no reason to enter into this exchange. It is simply a matter of calculation.

22...♘xd5

22...♖xd5? 23 ♗xd5 ♘xd5 24 ♖xd5 and White wins.

23 ♖e4! ♗xg5

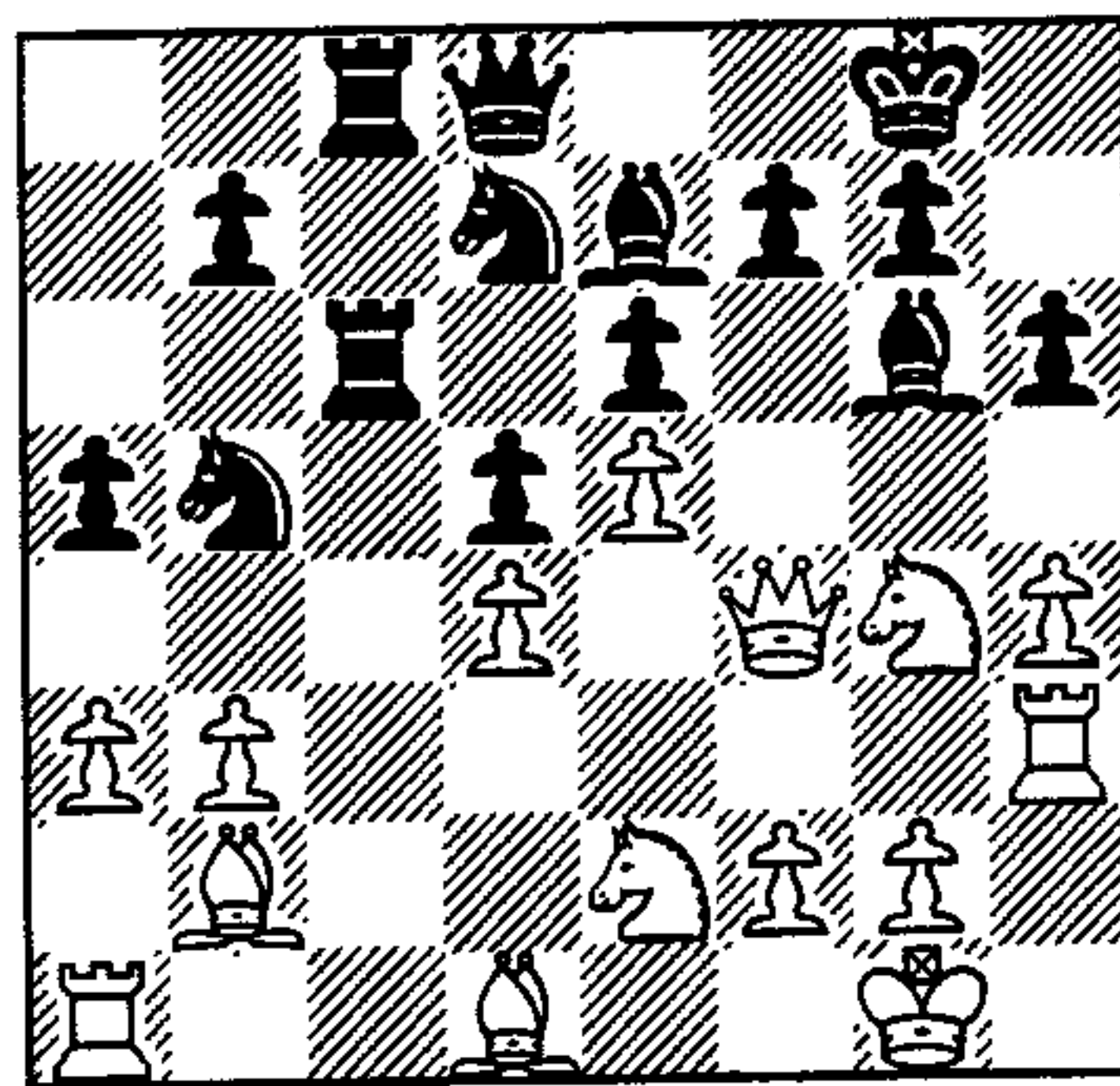
Again the only move. After 23...♗b4? 24 ♖xb4 and 23...♖e8 24 ♖xe7 ♖xe7 25 ♖xd5 White wins.

24 ♖xg5 ♖b6 25 ♖xd5 exd5 26 ♖e7! ♖g6+ 27 ♖xg6 hxg6 28 ♖xd5

White has an obvious advantage.

28...♖a7 29 ♖d6 ♖h7 30 ♖e4 ♖c7 31 ♖xa6 d5 32 ♖h4+ ♖g8 33 ♖d4 ♖f7 34 ♖f4+ ♖g8 35 ♖d4 ♖f7 36 ♖b6 ♖c4 37 ♖d2 b4 38 b3 ♖f4 39 ♖c2 g5 40 h3 ♖d7 41 ♖d1 1-0

Exercise 86: Black to move
Shirov-Karpov
Las Palmas 1994



With this position we have gone from the technical to the more complex. It is, of course, Alexei Shirov who has created this mess with the white pieces. White is threatening to attack the enemy king, simultaneously trying to keep the queenside closed from a possible invasion. But Black has a simple move that helps on both sides of the board. Apparently this is not too easy to find, but should still appear quite obvi-

ous once it is seen...

25...♖f8!

Black protects the weak dark squares around the king and puts pressure on a3. The situation is highly unclear.

26 a4

Around here White might possibly have a better way to play, but this in no way alters the correctness of Black's treatment.

26...♗a3! 27 ♖xa3

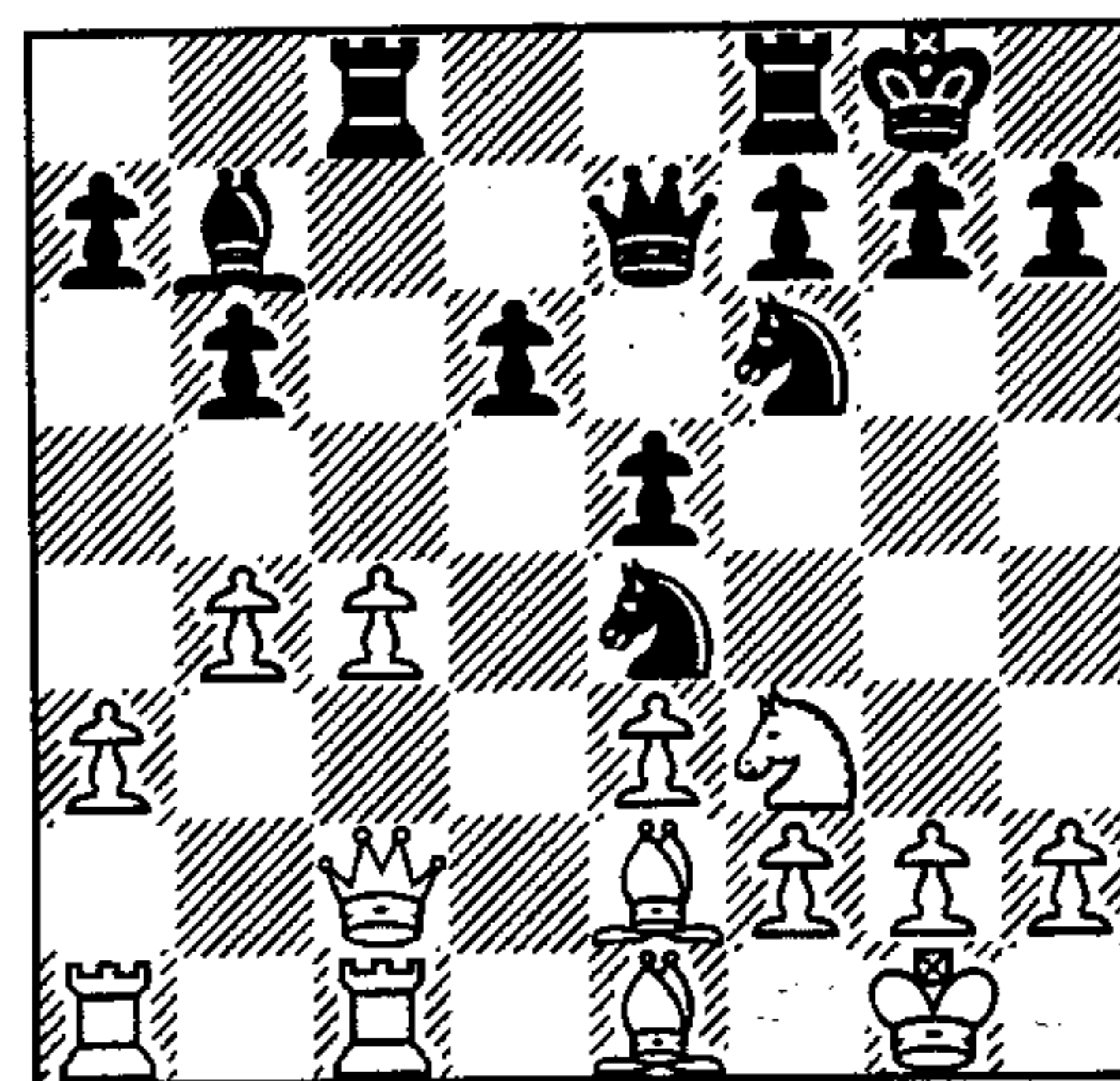
27 h5 ♖c2! is good for Black.

27...♖xa3 28 ♖g3!? h5 29 ♗e3 ♖b2! 30 ♖a2 ♖c1!

The infiltration is complete and Black has the advantage.

31 ♖g5 ♖b4 32 ♗f4? ♖xe3 33 fxe3 ♖c1! 34 ♗xg6 ♖xd1+ 35 ♖h2 fxg6 36 ♖xg6 ♖e7 37 ♖f2 ♖xh4+ 38 ♖h3 ♖xf2 0-1

Exercise 87: Black to move
Hertneck-Karpov
Germany 1994



One of the things that I find my pupils have a problem with is fluent development. Then there is the significant problem of how to identify important weaknesses and, subsequently, relate to them. In this position some pupils start

with ...b7-b5 and ...d6-d5 in order to challenge c4. But this is wrong as c4 is the only significant weakness in the position, so we do not wish to allow White to trade it off! The appropriate course of action involves finding a way to exert extra pressure on this pawn, thus continuing to keep White busy with unwelcome attention for the rest of the (middle)game. This also answers the basic question of how we get the f8-rook into play.

16...♖c7!

Opening up several avenues through which to hit c4. In the game Karpov chooses to play ...♖fc8 and ...♖a6 to force b4-b5 and thereby secure the c5-square for himself and retain c4 as a weakness to target. But also possible is something like ...♖b7-c8-e6, where the bishop can take aim at c4.

17 ♖b2 ♖e6 18 a4 ♖a6 19 b5 ♖b7 20 a5

White is trying to generate counterplay on the queenside and create a weakness on b6, but this is obviously more difficult to achieve than for Black to harass c4.

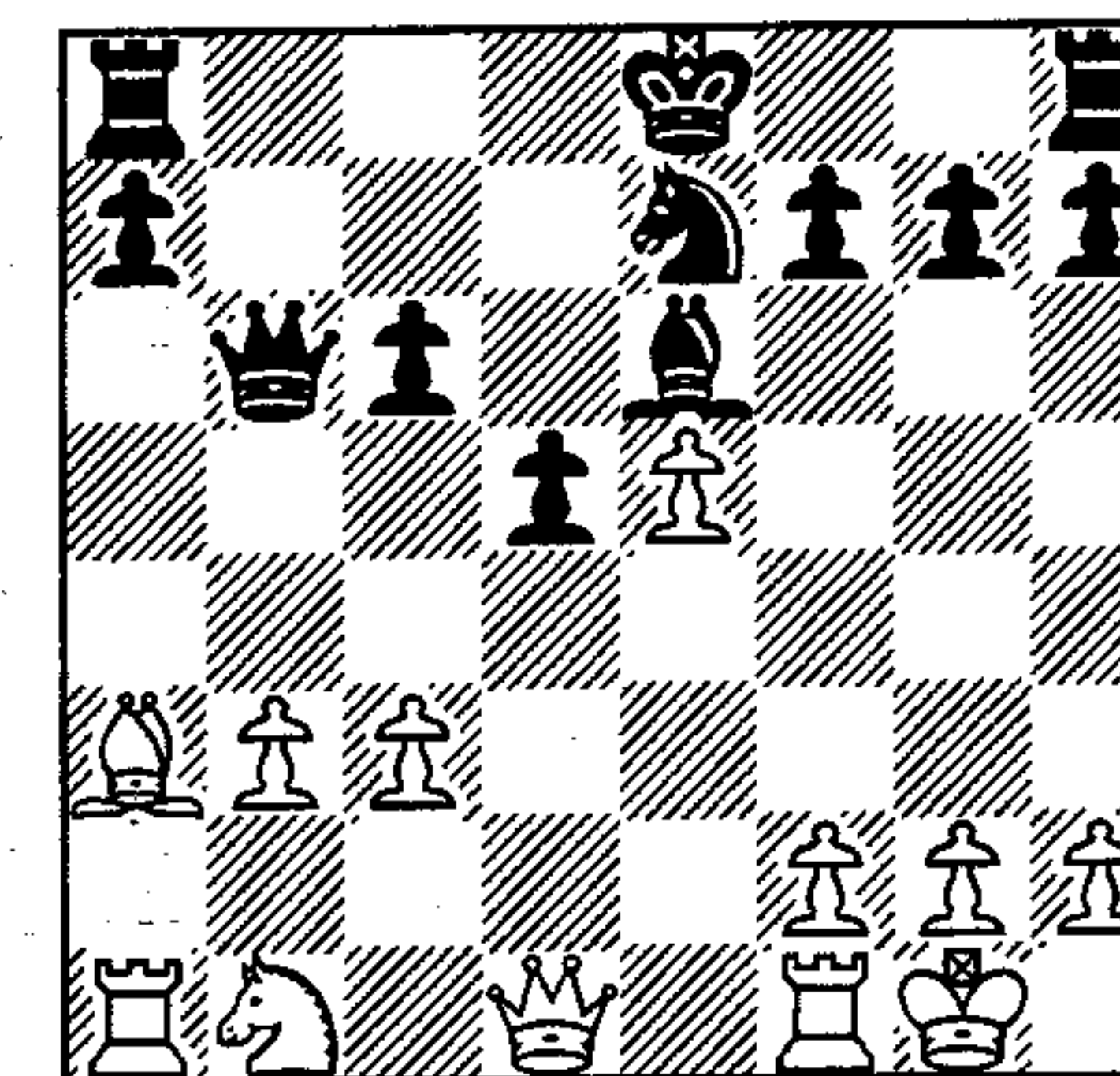
20...h6 21 ♖d1 ♖fc8

Bringing the rook into play and changing the pawn structure in his favour. He has obviously improved his position.

22 h3 ♗d7 23 ♗d2 ♗ec5! 24 axb6 axb6 25 f3 e4! 26 fxe4 ♗xe4 27 ♗xe4 ♖xe4 28 ♖g3 ♖g6 29 ♖h2 d5! 30 ♖ac1 ♗f6 31 ♖f1 ♖c5 32 cxd5 ♗xd5 33 ♖xc5 ♖xc5 34 ♖d4 ♖h7 35 ♖d2 h5 36 ♖f2 f6 37 ♖e2 ♗c3 38 ♖f1 ♗d5 39 ♖e2 f5 40 ♖e5 ♗c3 41 ♖f1 ♗xb5 42 ♖b2 ♗c7 43 ♖xc7 ♖xc7 44 g3? h4! 45

♖e5 ♖c1! 46 ♖f4 hxg3+ 47 ♖xg3 ♖xg3+ 48 ♖xg3 g5! 49 ♖a6 ♖g1+ 50 ♖h2 ♖b1 51 ♖f1 ♖b3 52 ♖g2 ♖g6 53 ♖xe4 fxe4 54 ♖g2 b5 55 ♖c2 ♖h5 56 ♖f2 ♖h4 57 ♖c5 ♖b2+ 58 ♖e1 b4 59 ♖d1 b3 60 ♖b5 ♖xh3 61 ♖xg5 ♖g2! 0-1

Exercise 88: White to move
Karpov-Polgar
Linares 1994



For this exercise I was so happy with the solution from Ivo Timmermans that I decided to include it in the book (with only a few comments):

'White has a definite advantage. He has prevented castling and is ready, after the preparatory ♖h1, to attack in the centre with f2-f4-f5. The bishop on a3 shines through the black position. There is still the additional issue of developing the queenside pieces, though. However, the a1-rook is already on an open file and the knight on b1 has opportunities to go to a3, c3 and d2. So the question is: where should the queen and king's rook go?

What can Black do in the meantime? He cannot castle and should take care of his a-pawn. When comparing pieces

we see that ♖a3 versus ♖e6 and ♖b1 versus ♖e7 are strongly in White's favour. There is counterplay only with ...c6-c5 and this should be prevented by White. For instance if White starts with 1 ♖h1, then 1...c5 comes, and perhaps ...♙c8 thereafter, and suddenly there is life in Black's minor pieces. White should play 1 ♖d4 to prevent ...c6-c5 and to go into a great endgame after 1...♙xd4 2 cxd4; the pawns on a7 and c6 are weak and ♙f1-c1 and ♖c3-a4 (or simply ♖b1-d2, defending b3) are fantastic manoeuvres. So Black should do something else: 1...♖f5 2 ♖c5 (2 ♖c5 or 2 ♖b4, with the threat of g2-g4, also look attractive – *on this I feel less certain – Aagaard*) and 3 ♖b4 still keeps the black king in the middle and maintains the positional advantages on the dark squares. Finally, no solution is 1...♙xb3 as White has more than one way to get an attack, e.g. 2 ♖xe7 ♖xe7 3 ♙xa7+ ♙xa7 4 ♙xa7+ ♖d8 5 ♖d2 followed by ♙b1, or (possibly stronger) 2 ♖c5 ♖b7 3 ♖d2 and an invasion of rooks on the b-file. In conclusion, White plays 1 ♖d4 and has a big advantage.

I agree with Ivo on more or less everything above. And it is a good chance to show a sample of the solutions people handed in. The method of deduction, the solution and the lines are all powerfully explained.

14 ♖d4! ♖f5

14...♙xb3? 15 ♖xe7 ♖xe7 16 ♖c5+! leaves Black finished.

15 ♖c5!!

This move is apparently hard to find for some people. I think this is the phenomenon I describe in *Excelling at Chess* called Unforcing Play. Such 'small'

moves are easy to overlook because we feel the need to be more aggressive. White has a clear plus.

15...h5 16 ♖d2 f6 17 exf6 gxf6 18 ♖b4

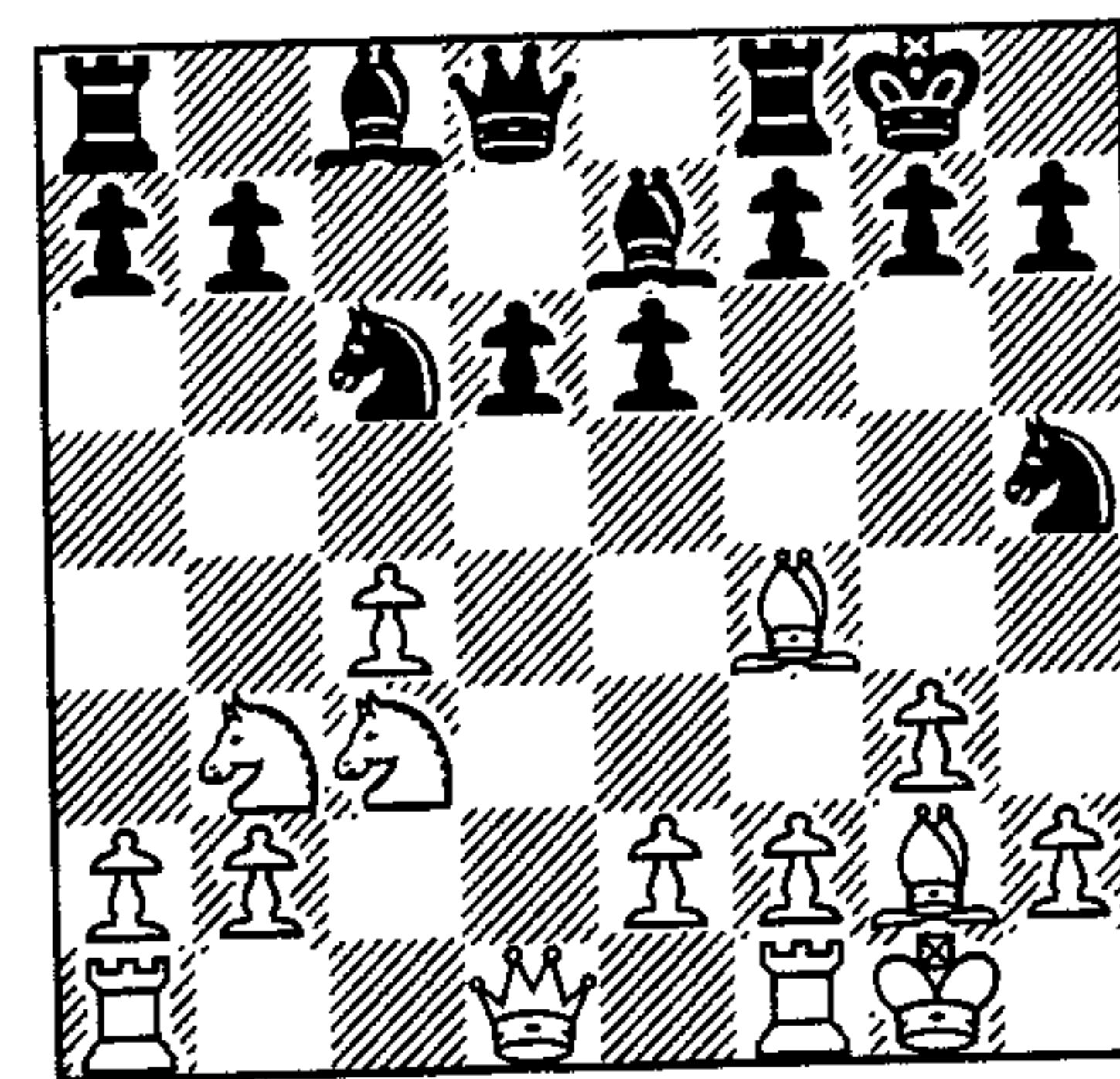
White misses the chance for 18 ♙xb6 axb6 19 ♖c5!! with the important little detail of 19...♙b8?! 20 ♖xb6! – for some reason this is also easy to overlook. Still, White is doing extremely well.

18...♖f7 19 ♙a4! ♙xc5 20 ♖xc5 a6 21 f3 h4?! 22 ♙fa1 ♖c8 23 ♖f2 ♙b8 24 b4 ♙e8 25 ♖b3 ♖b7 26 ♖a5 ♖a8 27 ♙4a2 ♙e6 28 ♖a7 ♙b5 29 ♖b3 ♖b7 30 g4 hxg3+ 31 hxg3 ♙e8 32 g4 ♖d6 33 ♖d4! 1-0

Exercise 89: White to move

Karpov-Topalov

Linares 1994



White has numerous ways to secure an advantage. 11 ♖d2, to recapture with the queen on f4, looks attractive, and so does 11 ♖e3, but none of them can compare to the way Karpov decides to alter the pawn structure!

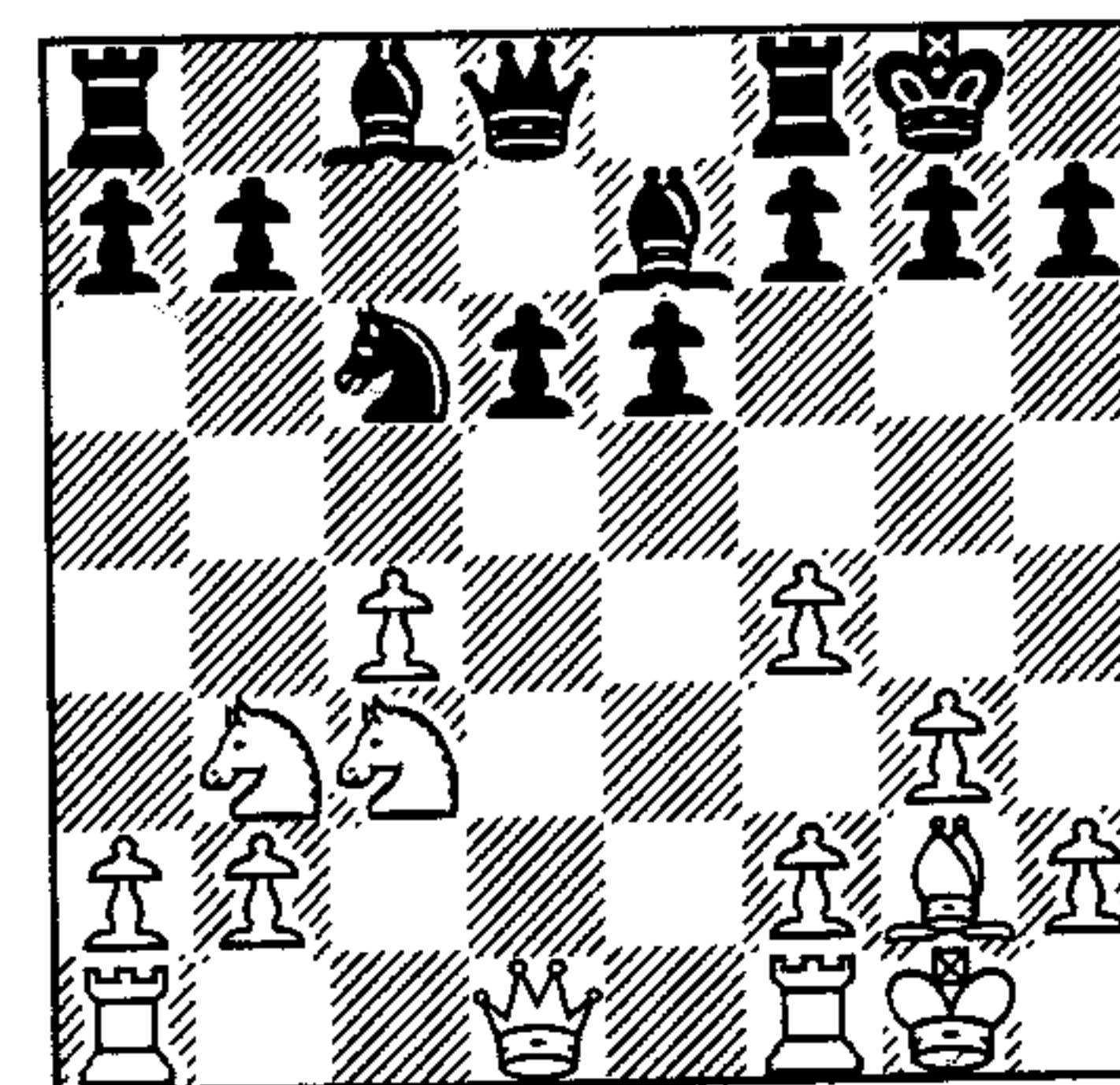
11 e3!

Maintaining perfect control over the centre. As far as ideal squares are con-

cerned, here it is the disappearance of them. Now Black is unable to find any good squares for his pieces. 11 e4 ♖xf4 12 gxf4 is less good because White's bishop is angry and unsighted and his kingside has – for no reason – been weakened on the dark squares. Black might not be able to exploit this immediately, but nor does he need to – this weakness is permanent. Finally there will be no attack on the g-file here as Black has the bishop to protect the g7-square.

11...♖xf4 12 exf4

Now Black has no easy way to develop. In fact examination of the position indicates that there is no difficult way, either!

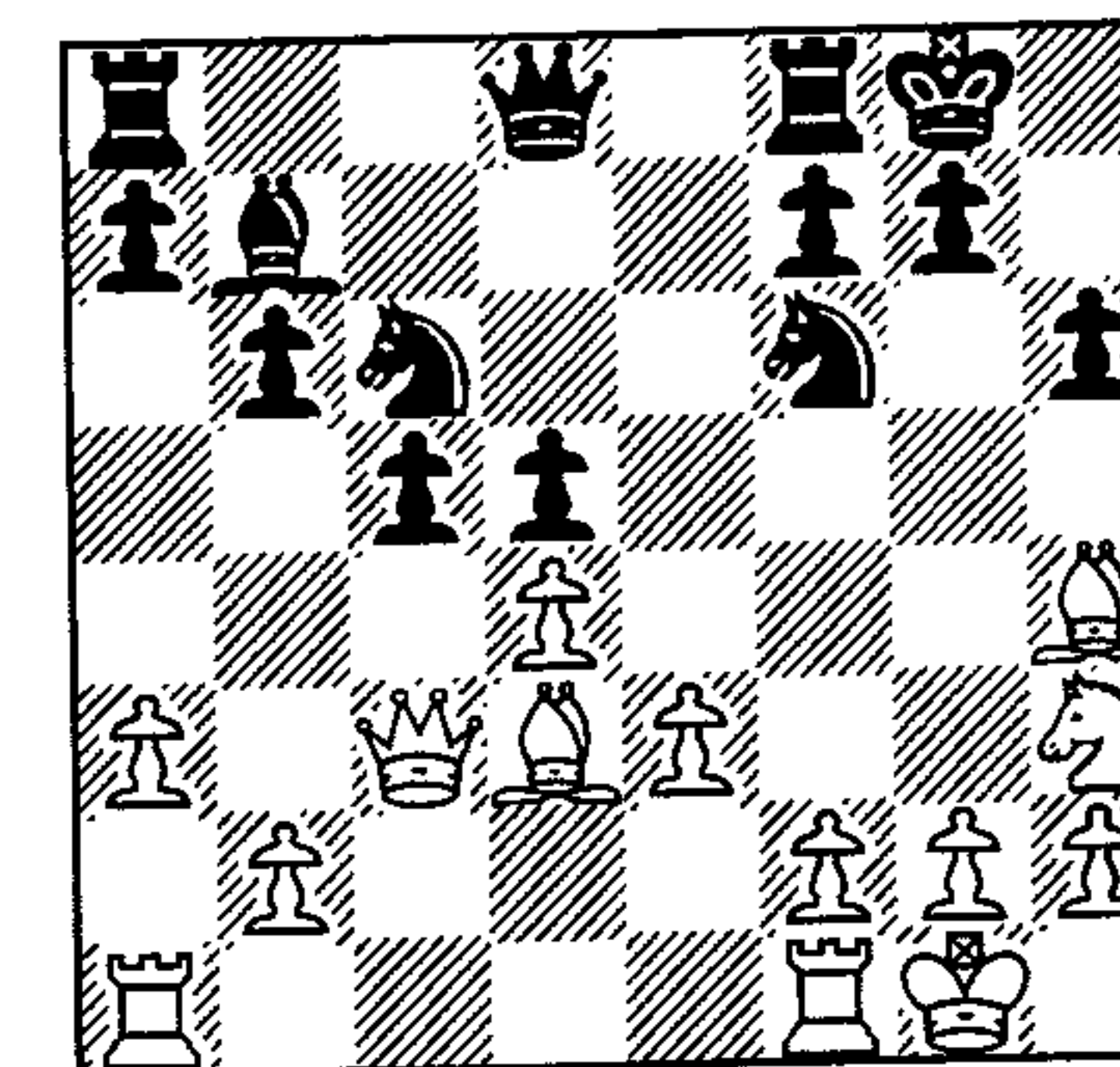


12...♖d7 13 ♖d2 ♖b8 14 ♙fe1! g6 15 h4 a6 16 h5 b5 17 hxg6 hxg6 18 ♖c5! dxc5 19 ♙xd7 ♙c8 20 ♙xe6! ♙a7 21 ♙xg6+ fxg6 22 ♙e6+ ♖g7 23 ♖xc6 ♙d8 24 cxb5 ♖f6 25 ♖e4 ♖d4 26 bxa6 ♙b6 27 ♙d1 ♙xa6 28 ♙xd4 ♙xd4 29 ♙f6+ ♖g8 30 ♙xg6+ ♖f8 31 ♙e8+ ♖g7 32 ♙e5+ ♖g8 33 ♖f6+ ♖f7 34 ♖e8+ ♖f8 35 ♙xc5+ ♙d6 36 ♙xa7 ♙xf6 37 ♖h5 ♙d2 38 b3 ♙b2 39 ♖g2 1-0

Exercise 90: Black to move

Georgiev-Karpov

Tilburg 1994



It is time for action. White is threatening to take on c5 and Black is on the wrong side of an unpleasant pin on the h4-d8 diagonal. The d3-bishop looks quite a lot better than Black's, while White's knight looks silly. White would like to increase the pressure on Black's centre, and has only two problems of his own – the weakness of the d4-square and the poorly placed knight. This Black can use to his advantage.

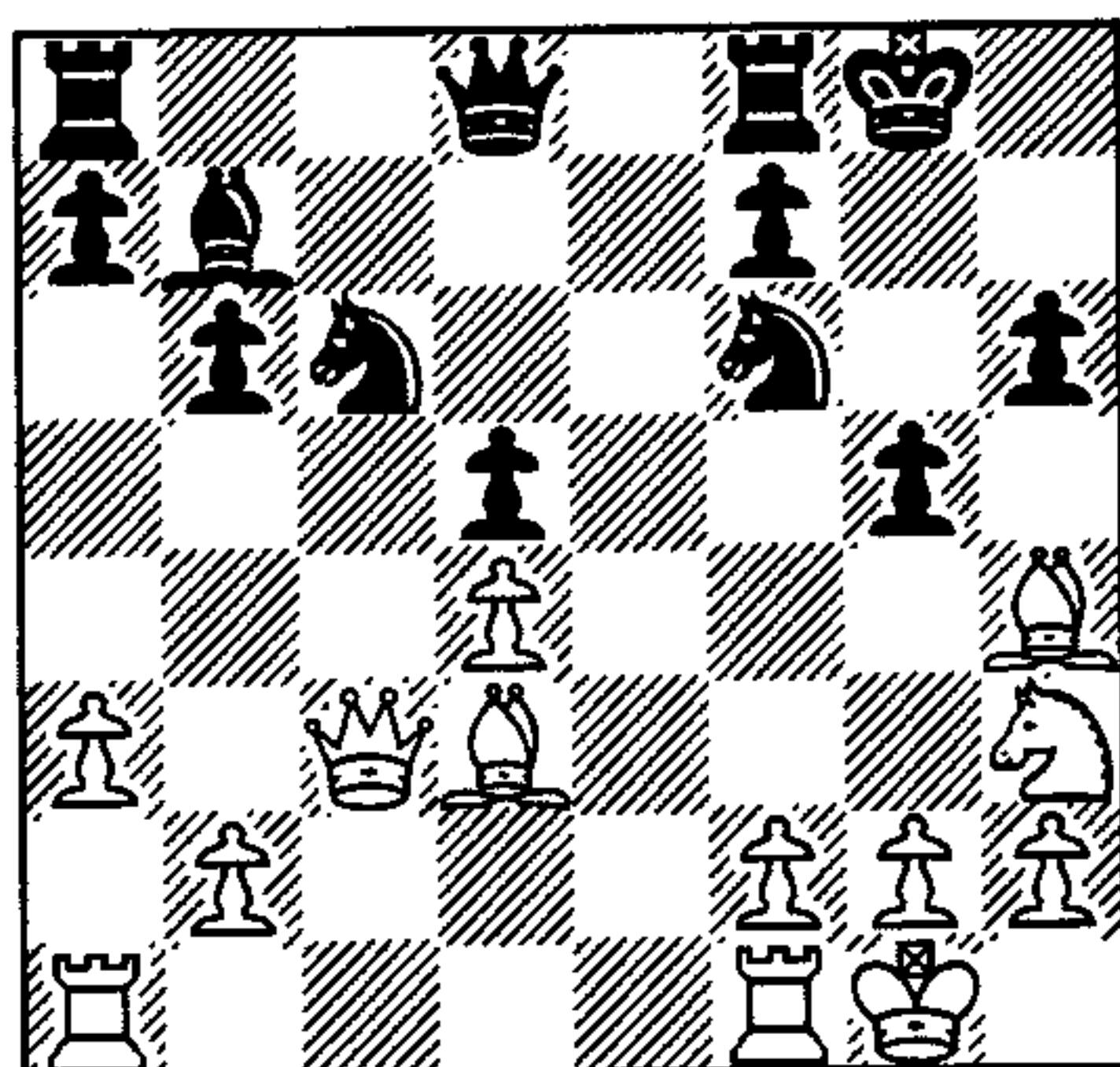
13...cxd4?!

13...g5! 14 ♖g3 cxd4 is the most accurate move order from a practical point of view since in the game White has the extra possibility of 15 ♖c1. Quite messy is 13...♙c8 14 dxc5 d4 15 ♖c2, when it is debatable that Black has made any progress. Rather he has opened the position for the white pieces. 13...c4!? 14 ♖c2 ♖c8 15 ♖xf6 ♙xf6 16 ♖f4 ♙d8, with approximate equality, is also possible.

14 exd4 g5!

14...♖e4? 15 ♖xd8 ♖xc3 creates a desperado situation in which more than one piece is hanging, usually resulting in

being sold at the maximum price – 16 ♖xb6! and White has the advantage.



15 ♖c1!

White should do something – anything – as after 15 ♖g3 ♖e4 16 ♖xe4 dxe4 Black looks better. For example 17 d5!? (probably the best move, as 17 ♖ad1 ♖d5 [17...♖e7!? also looks natural] 18 f3 ♖ae8 gives Black a good game – the opening of the long diagonal for his bishop is on its way, as it always would be) 17...♖xd5 18 ♖ad1 ♖f5 19 ♖d6 ♖ac8 20 ♖xh6 f6 21 ♖d6 ♖f7 (21...♖g7? does not work in view of 22 ♖h5! ♖g6? 23 ♖f4+! and White wins) 22 f4 ♖a6! (the position is messy and both players have problems to address here, but I have a feeling that White's position will crack – despite the fact that *Fritz* is less certain) 23 ♖e1 ♖e5 24 ♖g3 ♖d3 25 fxe5 fxe5 26 ♖h5 ♖f6 27 ♖xg5+ ♖g7 28 ♖b1 ♖xb2 is the result of a quick discussion with *Fritz*, and clearly White only just hanging on here.

15...♖h5

15...♖e4!? 16 f3 ♖xd4 17 ♖d1 ♖f5 also looks better for Black, but not much. But 15...gxe4?? 16 ♖xh6 ♖d6 (16...♖e8 17 ♖g5 ♖e4 18 f3! and White wins) 17 ♖h7+ ♖h8 18 ♖f5+ ♖g8 19

♖f4 ♖xd4 20 ♖h5 is to be avoided.

16 ♖e1

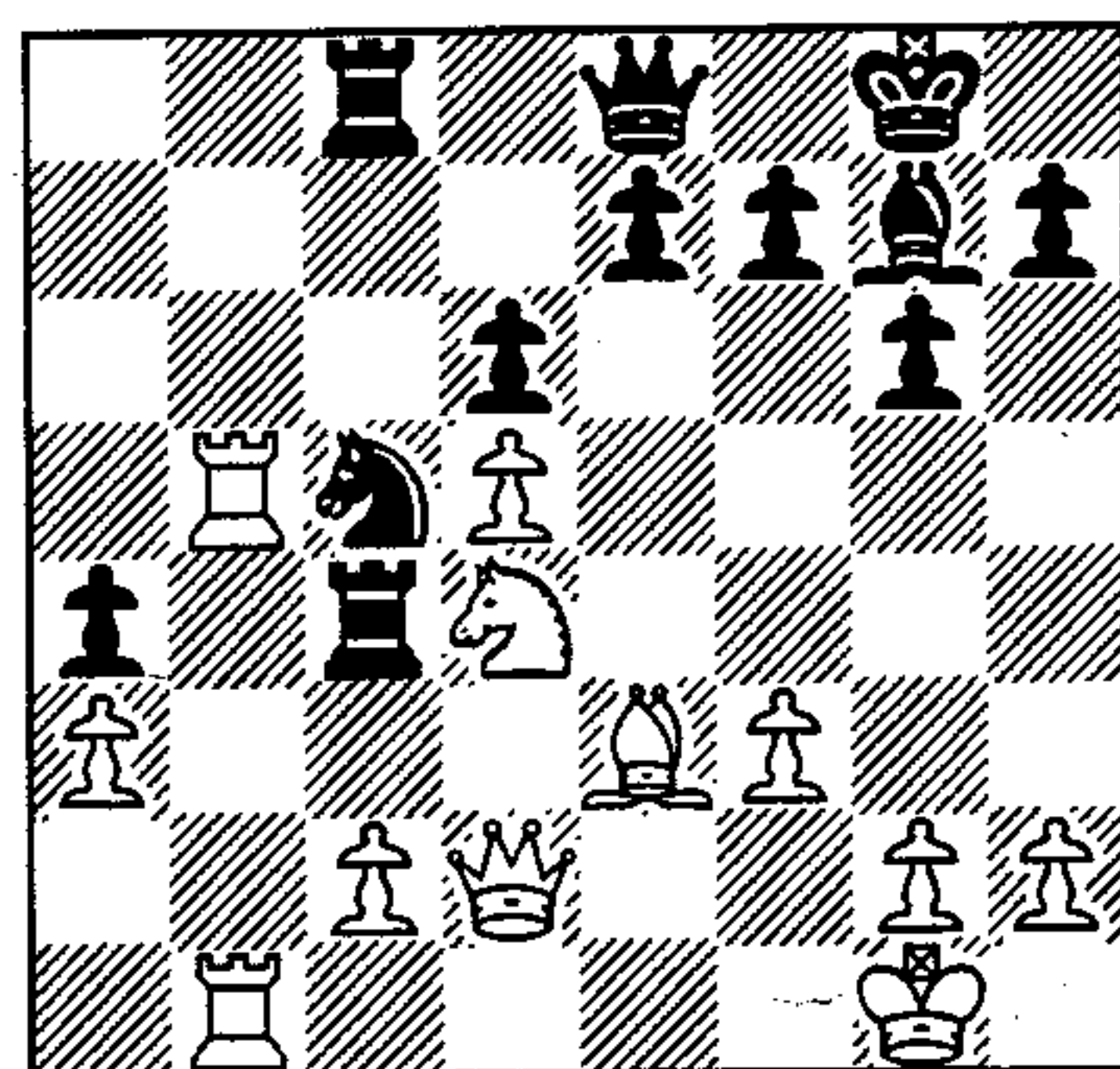
16 ♖d1 ♖g7 17 ♖g3 f5 18 ♖e5 ♖xe5 19 dxe5 ♖c8 20 f4 g4 21 ♖f2 d4 is better for White according to *Fritz*, and clearly better for Black according to Karpov. As I see it the truth is somewhere in between. I prefer Black too, but how much? Hard to judge.

16...♖f6

16...♖xd4 17 ♖d1 ♖g7 18 ♖g3 ♖df5 19 ♖e5 gives White some compensation in the form of active bishops and positional targets in Black's weak dark squares.

17 ♖xg5 hxg5 18 ♖xg5 ♖xd4 19 ♖e3 f5! 20 ♖h3 ♖e5! 21 ♖c2 ♖g7 22 ♖e3 ♖c4 23 ♖h6 ♖f7 24 ♖d2 ♖c8 25 ♖b3 ♖c6 26 ♖g3 ♖cc7 27 ♖e1 ♖g4 28 ♖f4 ♖ce7 29 ♖c1 ♖b5 30 h3 ♖f6 31 ♖c2 ♖e2 32 ♖d4 ♖c4 33 ♖xc4 dxc4 34 ♖g5 b5 35 b3 f4! 36 ♖c3 ♖d5 37 ♖f3 ♖e5 38 h4 ♖e6 39 bxc4 bxc4 40 ♖g6 ♖g7 0-1

Exercise 91: Black to move
Søndergaard-Aagaard
Simultaneous Display,
Denmark 2002



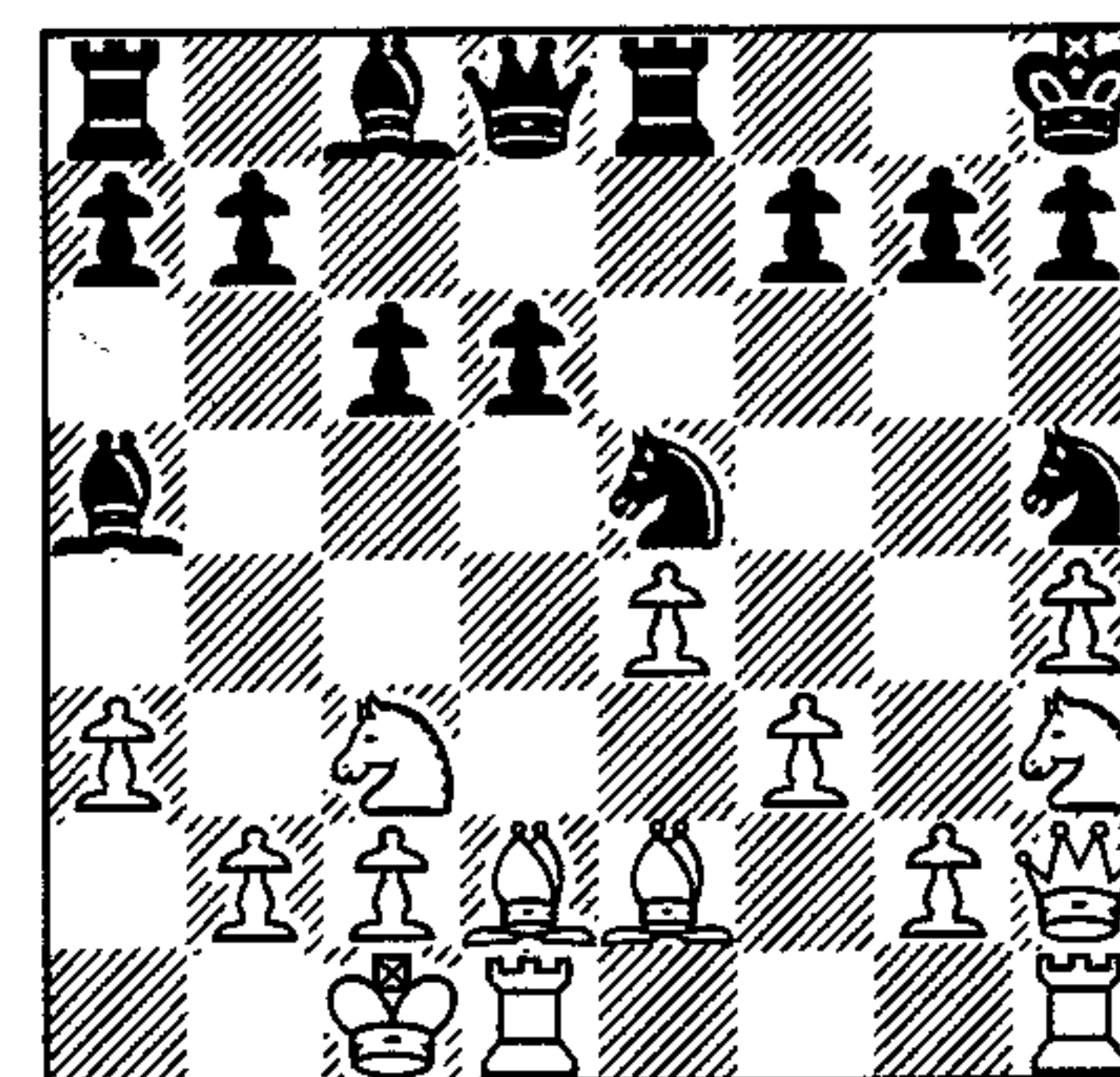
This is a trap. Sorry. Sometimes you should test people's awareness of tactics. Black wins the exchange by choosing the accurate move order.

1...♖xd4! 2 ♖xd4 ♖b3!

Look at how many white pieces are hanging (in one way or another). White could limit the loss with ♖5xb3, but the game is still lost.

3 cxb3? ♖xb5 4 ♖e3 ♖c2 5 ♖d1 ♖a2 6 ♖c1 ♖xc1 7 ♖xc1 ♖e2 8 ♖c8+ ♖g7 9 ♖d4+ f6 10 ♖h3 ♖e1 mate

Exercise 92: Black to move
Shirov-Karpov
Dos Hermanas 1995



Again this is a question of tactical awareness. Black has a forcing advantage with...

14...♖xh3!

14...♖xc3 15 ♖xc3 ♖xh3 is a faulty move order due to 16 g4! ♖xg4 17 fxe4 ♖f6 18 ♖g2 and the two bishops and the open files compensate for the pawn.

15 ♖xh3?

15 gxe3 ♖xh4 16 ♖hg1 h6 17 ♖b1 is much better. Black is better after 17...b5 18 ♖e1 ♖f6 19 ♖d5 cxd5 20 ♖xa5 but still it is a mess. 15 g4? ♖xg4 16 fxe4

♖f6 is definitely not the same anymore.

15...♖xc3 16 bxc3

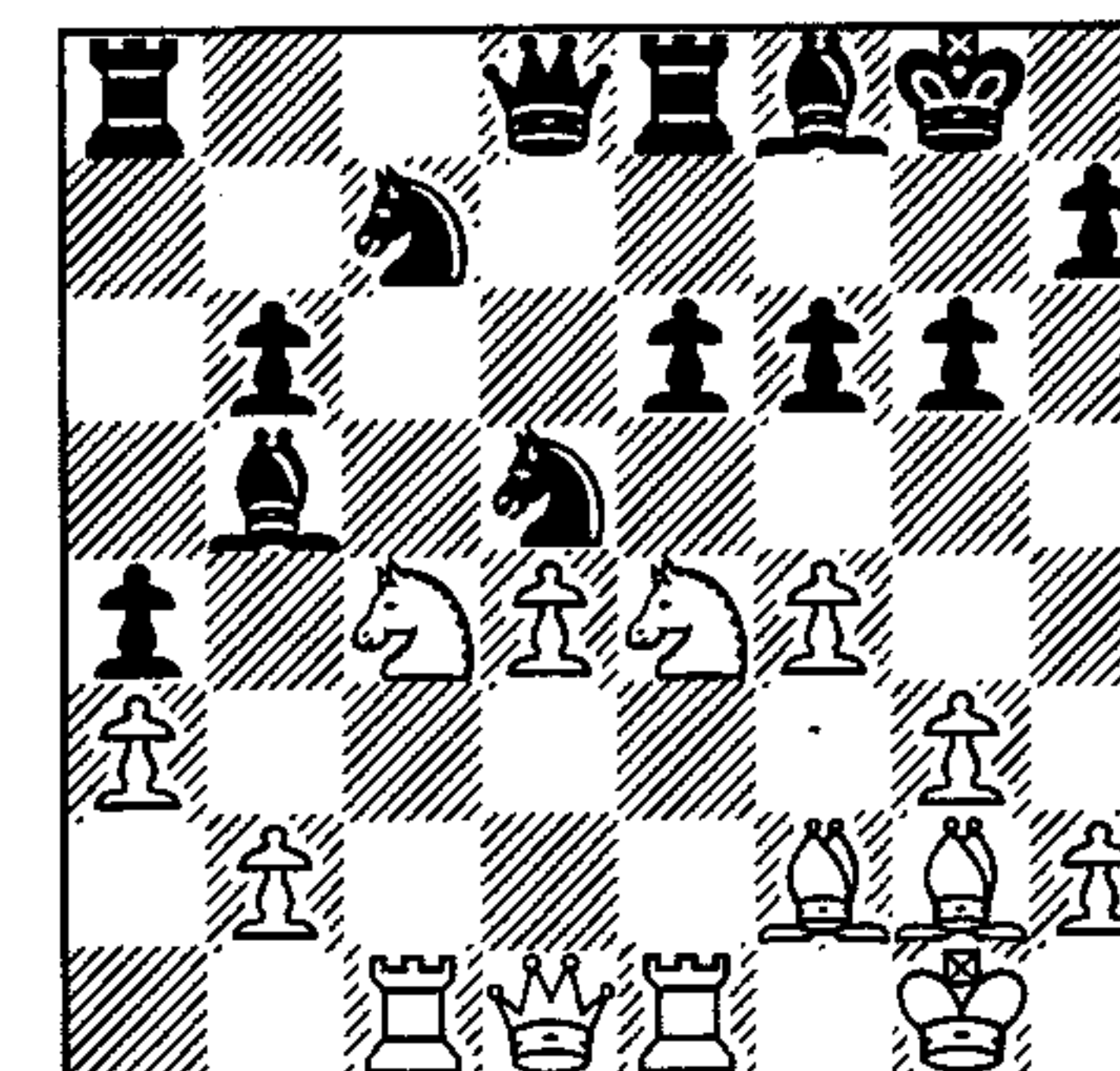
16 ♖xc3 ♖f4.

16...♖f6

Black is simply a lot better here. The damage to the White king's safety is permanent.

17 c4?! ♖b6! 18 f4 ♖ed7 19 ♖d3 ♖c5 20 e5 ♖a4 21 ♖b4 dxe5 22 c5 ♖c7 23 ♖c4 a5 0-1

Exercise 93: White to move
Karpov-Gelfand
Sanghi Nagar 1995



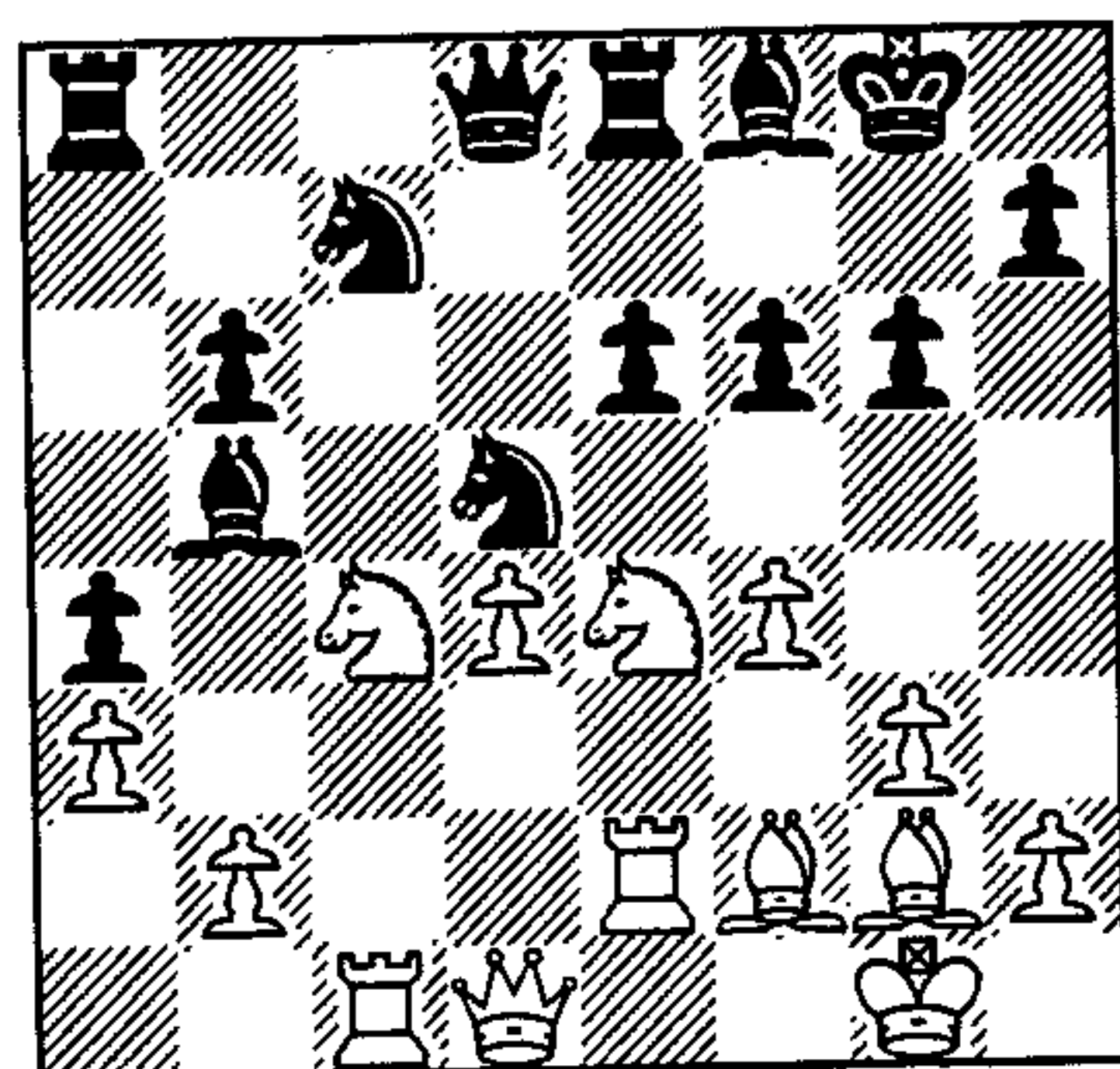
This is a really difficult exercise, so don't be disappointed if you failed to get to grips with it. Black has a good set-up but it is of a rather defensive nature. White has potential weaknesses in b2 and d4, but it is difficult to imagine any way that these should come under serious fire. Black has a weakness on b6 (and perhaps e6) but this is also hardly enough to worry about. So White should try to create further weaknesses in Black's camp if he is to generate an advantage. This is best done with the pawn advance h2-h4-h5 (g3-g4-g5 weakens the dark squares around the white king just as much as those around

its opposite number, thus achieving nothing). But this is not the best option in this position just yet. There is a great improvement to be made before.

As is the case in so many situations it is important to improve your worst placed piece, or the piece that can be best improved. In this respect it would be really nice to be able to do something for the f2-bishop, but right now it does a valuable job from f2, and no ideal square is apparent. But what about the e1-rook? The e4-knight is not going to move, and the e6-pawn is hardly weak. The following manoeuvre is therefore both logical and necessary, for an attack on Black's king cannot be seriously considered before White has mobilised all his forces to their optimum.

25 ♖e2!

The rook is brought to the c-file where it will do much more good. White has time to do this as Black has no obvious improvements to make.

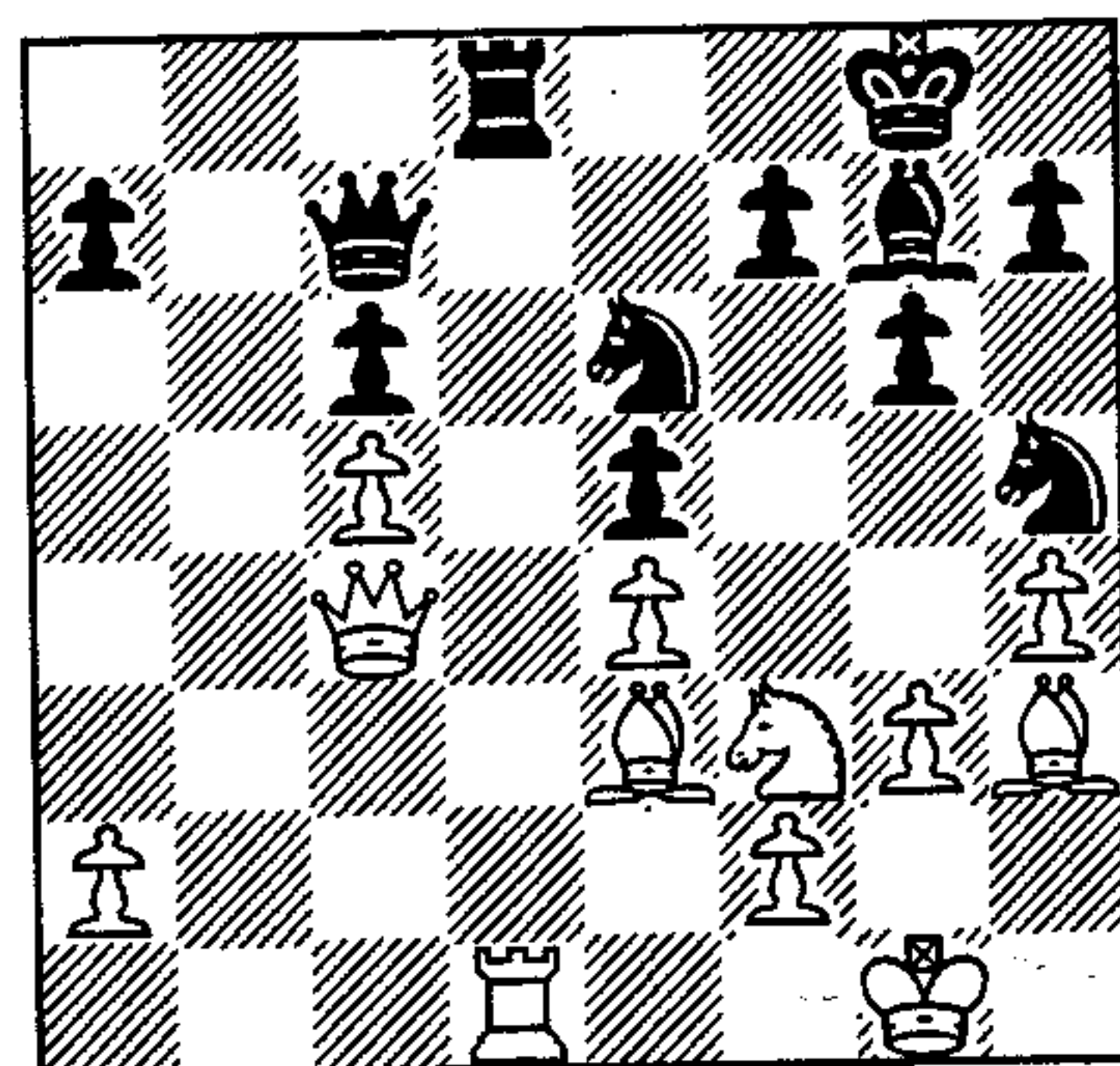


25...♗e7 26 ♖ec2 ♖b8 27 ♗d2 ♖f8 28 h4

Look at the position from a few moves ago and compare h4 in that position with h4 in this. White is better.

28...♗e8?! 29 ♗e3 ♗g7 30 ♗c3! ♗xc3 31 ♖xc3 g5!? 32 hxg5 fxe5 33 ♗g4 gxf4 34 gxf4 ♗d6 35 ♖f3! ♗e8 36 ♗e5 ♗f5?! 37 d5! fxe5 38 fxe5 ♖b7 39 ♗h2! ♖g7 40 ♗h3 ♗h5 41 ♖f4 ♗h8? 42 ♗xf5! exf5 43 ♗h4 ♗e8 44 ♗f6 ♗g4 45 ♗xg7+ ♗xg7 46 ♖c7+ ♗h8 47 e6! ♗h5+ 48 ♗g1 ♗g5 49 ♗f2! ♗h4+ 50 ♗e3 1-0

Exercise 94: White to move
Salov-Lautier
Wijk aan Zee 1991



This position is not so much positional as it is tactical, although it is grounded in positional evaluation. Clearly the best move is:

22 ♖d6!

Here is the reasoning. The tactical exchange that now follows is more or less forced and we reach an endgame with an outside passed pawn and a weakness on e6. This is the principle of two weaknesses, which in most cases is enough to win an endgame. If you had problems evaluating the end of this line I suggest that you either search your database for endgames with outside passed pawns and see how they work,

or play the position a few times with *Fritz* with both colours.

22...♖xd6

This is forced due to 22...♗f8 23 ♗g5! and all of ♖xd8, ♗xf7, ♗xf7 and ♗d7 are threatened. White wins.

23 cxd6 ♗xd6 24 ♗xe6 ♗xe6

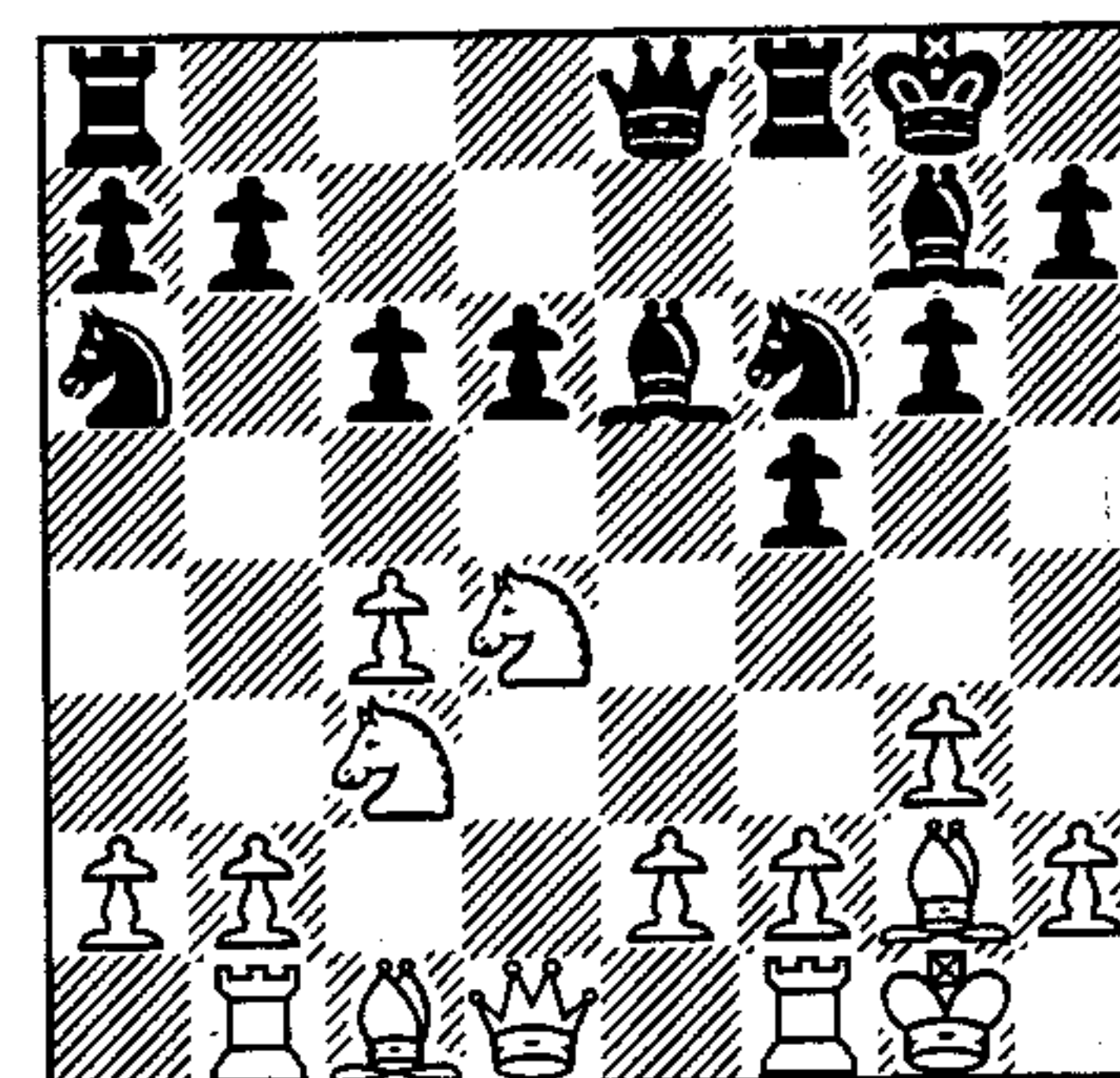
After 24...fxe6 25 ♗xa7 White is also threatening ♗g5, and the inclusion of the queens in the position in no way offers Black serious hopes of a perpetual check.

25 ♗xe6 fxe6 26 ♗xa7 ♗f6 27 a4 ♗d7

Salov gives the following, very convincing line: 27...♗xe4 28 a5 ♗c3 29 a6 ♗d5 30 ♗c5 ♗c7 31 a7 and White is winning (e.g. 31...e4 32 ♗g5).

28 a5 ♗f8 29 a6 c5 30 ♗d2 ♗f7 31 ♗c4 1-0

Exercise 95: White to move
Salov-Gurevich
Reggio Emilia 1992



This position comes under the 90% rule. Remember that the move you want to play for positional reasons normally has a 90% chance of working tactically. Of course that does not count for sacrifices and other brutal approaches as

often as it does in quiet positions, but it is still worth investigating if the move you want to play for positional reasons works tactically. Here it does. White is all set up for b2-b4-b5 but cannot protect his c-pawn with moves other than b2-b3. So it is now or never, as this will not change.

12 b4!

12 ♗xe6 ♗xe6 13 b3 ♖ad8 14 ♗a3 ♖fe8 15 ♗c2 ♗c7 16 ♖be1 d5 was equal in Horvath-Santo Roman, Novi Sad Olympiad 1990.

12...♗xc4?!

A very risky decision. It is not difficult to understand what Black was thinking: if White is allowed to execute his plan at least I should bag a pawn. Instead 12...♗e4 13 ♗xe4 fxe4 14 ♗xe6 ♗xe6 15 ♗c2 ♖fe8 16 ♗e3 ♗c7 17 ♖fd1 leads to a comfortable advantage for White (equal according to *Fritz*, which is rather irrelevant). However, this seems to be the best option.

13 b5! cxb5 14 ♗dxb5 ♖d8 15 ♗a3

Here White has a superior way to prove his advantage in 15 ♗xd6! ♗e6 16 ♗a3 ♗e4 17 ♗cxe4 fxe4 18 ♗c2!, when White is winning according to Salov, who writes the following in his annotations: 'In the post-mortem together with Mikhail we discovered the following beautiful line: 18...♗d5 19 ♗e4 ♖fe8 20 ♗g5! ♗e2 21 ♗d5+ ♖d5 22 ♖be1!! ♗e1 23 ♖e1 ♖e1 24 ♗g2 ♖g5 25 ♗c4+! ♗h8 26 ♗c8+ and mate in two moves.'

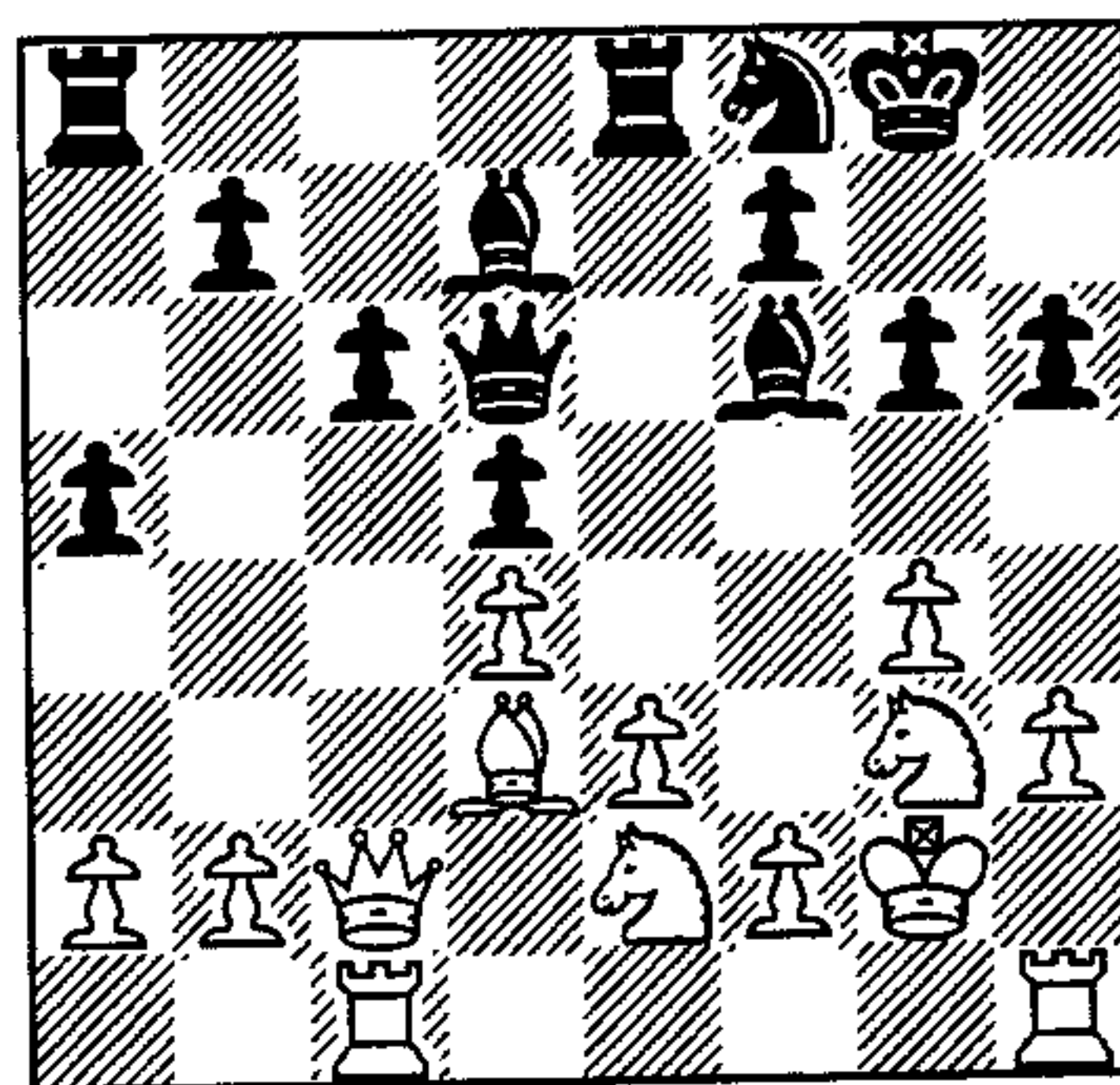
15...d5! 16 ♗d6! ♗e5 17 ♗xc4 dxc4 18 ♗c2 ♗c5 19 ♗xc5??

Very bad and very sad. After 19 ♗a4! b6 20 ♗xc5 bxc5 21 ♗xc4+ White wins.

19...♖xc5 20 ♖b5 ♖d6! 21 ♖xb7 ♗h8! 22 ♘b5? ♖c5! 23 a4 a6 24 ♘c3 ♘g4 25 h3 ♘e3 26 fxe3 ♖xe3+ 27 ♗h2 f4??

Life is tragic.
28 ♖f3! fxg3+ 29 ♖xg3 ♙e5 30 ♖xh7+! 1-0

Exercise 96: Black to move
Salov-Van der Sterren
Hilversum 1993



In this position White has little control over the queenside – an area in which he normally places his hopes in the Queen’s Gambit Declined. A transfer of his forces to the queenside seriously compromises the kingside, where g2-g4 has created certain commitments. For this reason White will have to play on the kingside, and as Black has a dark-squared bishop it will most likely be on the light squares. All of this basic logic points us in the direction of the threat in the position. White will play 18 h4! and it will give him the advantage. Black should prevent this, after which he will have time to slowly improve his position.

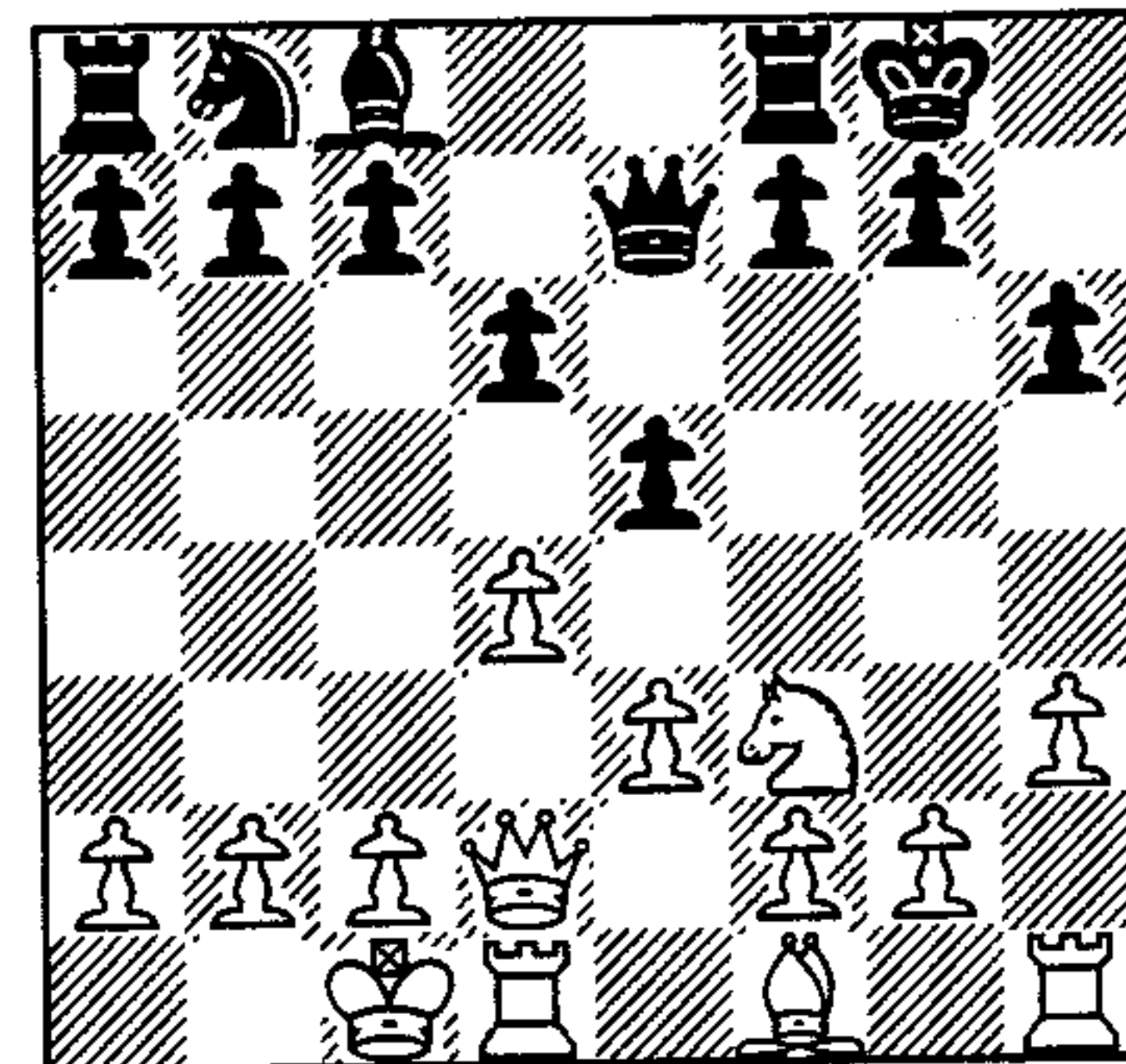
17...b6?

17...♙h4! would have given Black a

better game, when it is not easy to see how White can improve his position, whereas Black has a lot of moves coming.

18 h4! c5 19 dxc5 bxc5 20 ♖xc5 ♖xc5 21 ♖xc5 ♙xg4 22 h5 g5 23 ♙f5! ♙xe2 24 ♘xe2 ♙xb2 25 ♖xd5 ♖e5 26 ♖hd1 a4 27 ♘g3 ♖a5 28 ♖xa5 ♖xa5 29 ♙c2! ♘e6 30 ♖d7 ♙g7 31 ♖b7 ♙f8 32 ♗f3 ♗g7? 33 ♙g6 ♘d8 34 ♖d7 ♗g8 35 ♖xd8 fxg6 36 hxg6 ♗g7 37 ♗g4! ♙a3! 38 ♗h5! g4+ 39 ♗xg4 ♗xg6 40 ♖g8+ ♗f7 41 ♖c8! ♖g5+ 42 ♗f3 ♙f8 43 ♖c7+ ♗e6 44 ♖c6+ ♗f7 45 e4 ♖b5 46 ♘f5 ♖b2 47 e5 1-0

Exercise 97: White to move
Salov-Glek
Wijk aan Zee 1997



White has a lead in development and he cannot use it to create an attack on the kingside (the pieces are not headed that way, and Black has no obvious weaknesses). Consequently the correct approach is to put immediate pressure on the centre, which is in fact Black’s only weakness. If not, then the lead in development will soon be history, and White will be left with no structural ad-

vantage to compensate for the loss.

11 dxe5 dxe5 12 ♖c3!

The point. Now Black has problems with both the dark squares and coordination. 12 ♙b5 c6 does not seem to achieve anything as the knight is far from d6.

12...♘c6

After 12...e4 13 ♘d4 Black still has problems with his development as c7 is hanging, and thus White has a small advantage. White wins a pawn after 12...♖e8? 13 ♖xe5! etc.

13 ♙b5 ♖e8!

Black cannot prevent the doubled pawn for after 13...♙d7? 14 ♙xc6 ♙xc6 15 ♘xe5 ♙xg2 16 ♖hg1 ♙e4 17 ♘c6 White wins.

14 ♖d2?

This is silly. After 14 ♙xc6 bxc6 15 ♘d2 White has a structural advantage. But not 15 ♖xc6 ♖b8 and Black has some compensation.

14...♘b4!

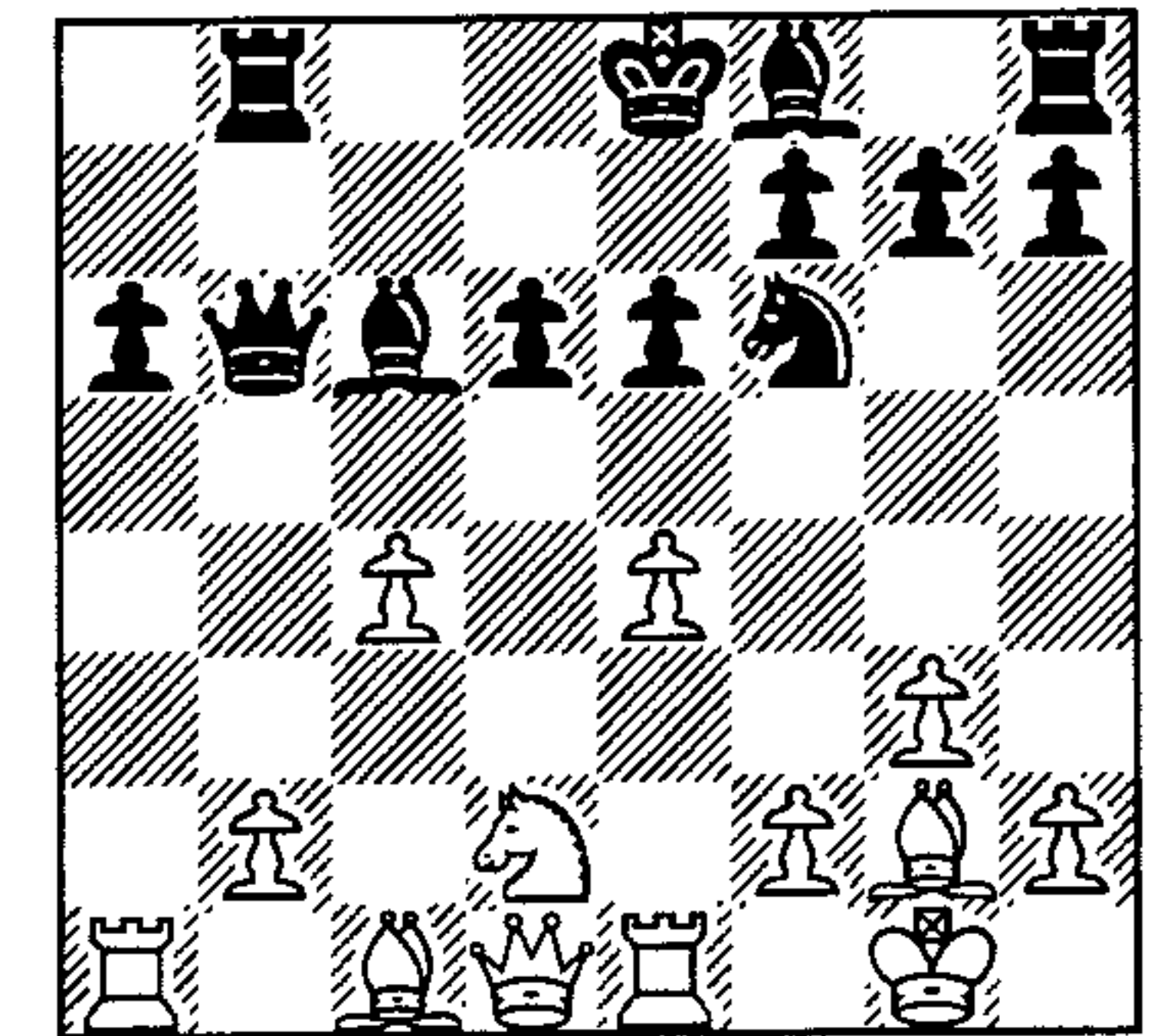
Perhaps this is the move that White missed.

15 ♗b1 c6 16 a3 cxb5?!

Instead of this careless capture, the move 16...a5! is a considerable improvement.

17 ♖xb4 ♖xb4 18 axb4 f6! 19 ♖hd1 ♙e6 20 b3 ♗f7 21 e4 ♖ac8?! 22 ♗b2 ♖c7 23 ♘e1! ♗e7 24 ♘d3 g5 25 h4! gxh4 26 ♖h1 h3 27 f4! ♖g8!? 28 gxh3 ♖d7!? 29 fxe5 fxe5 30 ♖e2 ♖d4 31 ♘xe5 ♖xb4 32 ♖a1! ♖g3 33 ♖xa7 ♗d6! 34 ♘d3 ♖xb3+ 35 cxb3 ♖xd3 36 b4 ♖b3+ 37 ♗c2 ♖xh3? 38 ♖xb7 ♙b3+ 39 ♗d2 ♙c4 40 ♖e3 ♖h2+ 41 ♗c3+- ♖h1 42 e5+ ♗c6 43 ♖a7 ♖b1 44 ♖a6+ ♗b7 45 ♖xh6 1-0

Exercise 98: White to move
Salov-Karpov
Hoogovens 1998



One of the important things to do before formulating a plan is to take all aspects of the position into consideration. One of these is spotting weaknesses. Here Black has a clear weakness on a6, which might be very hard to defend. Black also has a problem with his development, and White would love to prevent ...♙e7 followed by ...0-0 (at least for the time being). It is often the case that a move that addresses some of the immediate considerations in a position also serves other, deeper objectives. Here the attack on a6 happens to also prevent ...♙e7.

15 ♖e3!

The most obvious way to attack a6, and it turns out that Black cannot develop freely.

15...♘d7

If 15...♙e7? 16 ♖b3 ♖c7 17 ♖xb8+ ♖xb8 Black has a loose piece on c6 and White wins after 18 e5! ♙xg2 19 exf6.

16 ♖b3 ♖a7 17 ♖ba3 ♙b7 18 b4 ♖b6 19 ♖a4!

Black has a more or less permanent problem with his development. Now

the knight on d7 is in trouble.

19...♙e7 20 ♖b2 ♙f6?

20...e5 is a disgusting move, but might still be the best option.

21 e5!

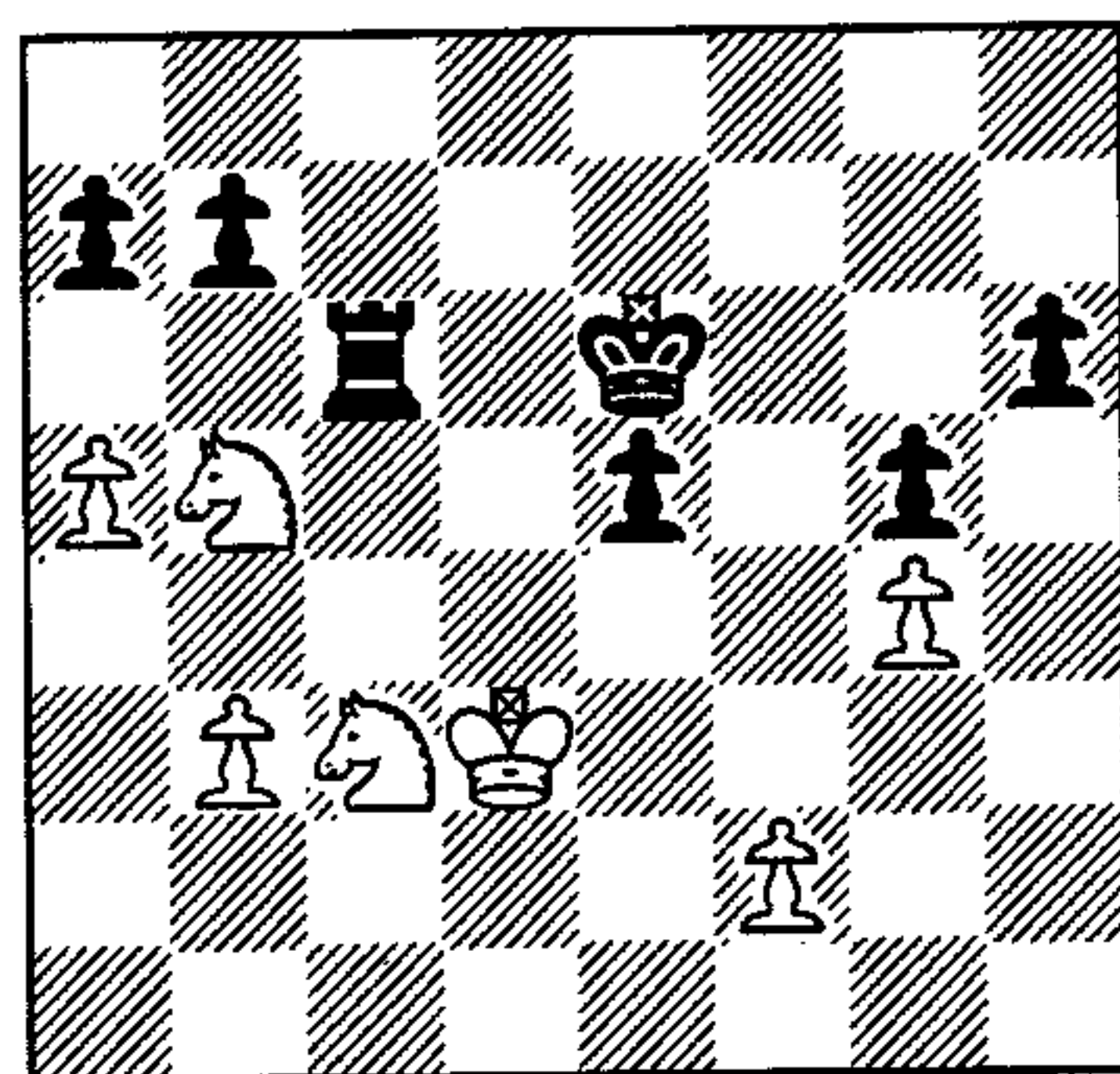
Sealing Black's fate.

21...♙xe5 22 c5 ♖c7 23 ♙xe5 dxe5 24 ♙xb7 ♖xb7 25 c6 ♖b6 26 ♖xa6 ♖xc6 27 ♖c4!

The piece cannot be saved.

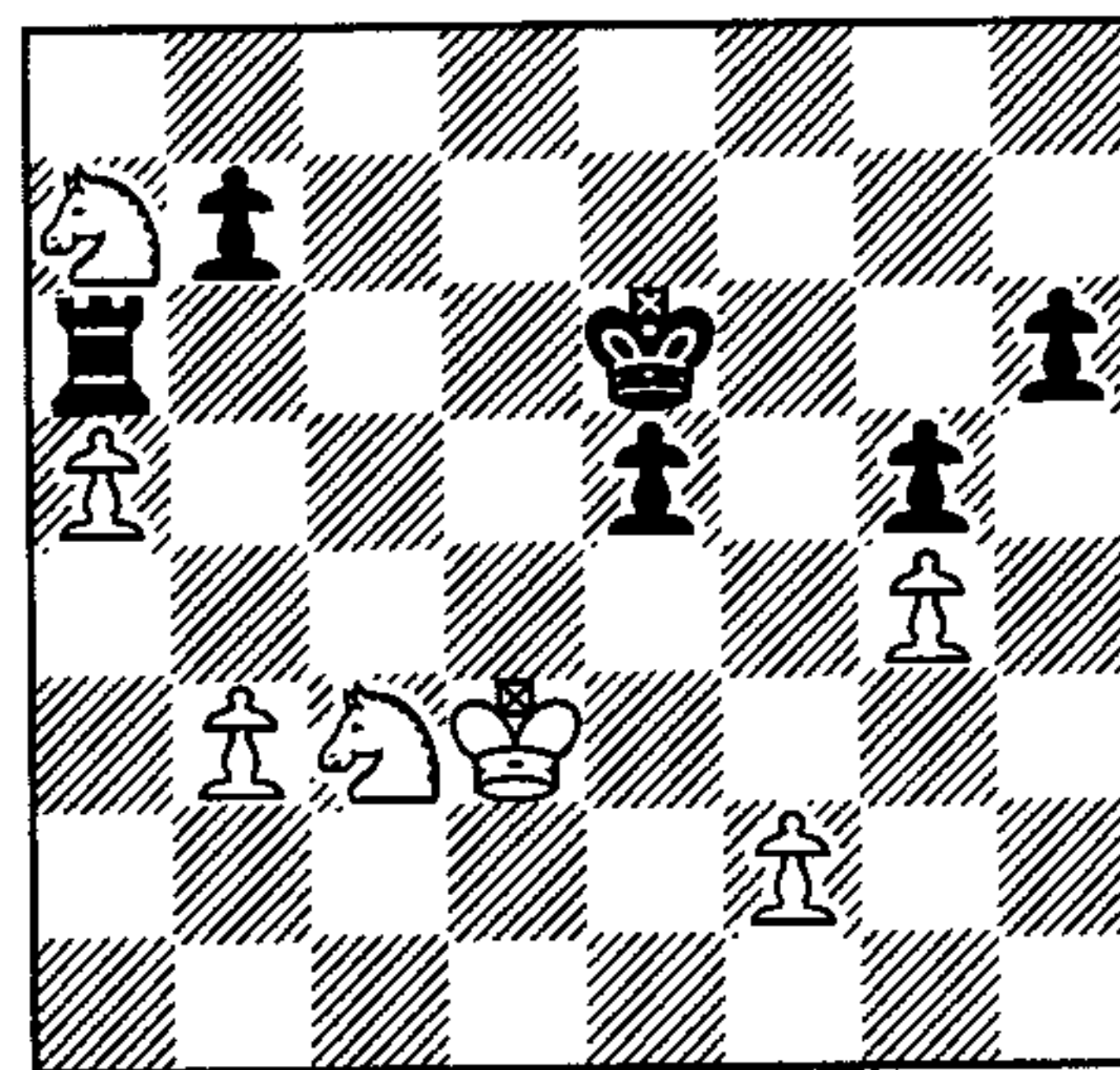
27...♖b8 28 ♖xb6 0-0 29 ♖c4 ♖e4 30 ♖e3 ♖d5 31 ♖xe5 ♖fc8 32 ♖d3 1-0

Exercise 99: White to move
Lund-Husted
Denmark 2002



When calculating it is useful to end a line like you started – looking for extra possibilities. Obviously the first move that comes to mind is seldom the only one in the position. It might be the best in 50% of the cases, but just following your first idea will then result in making the correct choice only 50% of the time! Here it would not do you any good. White played 1 ♖e4 and eventually lost, although the position is, of course, playable for him. But he could have won in an instant...

1 ♖xa7! ♖a6



2 b4!!

This move has to be found – it will not appear from nowhere.

2...♖xa7 3 ♖b5 ♖a6 4 ♖c7+ ♖d6 5 ♖xa6 bxa6 6 ♖c4! ♖c6

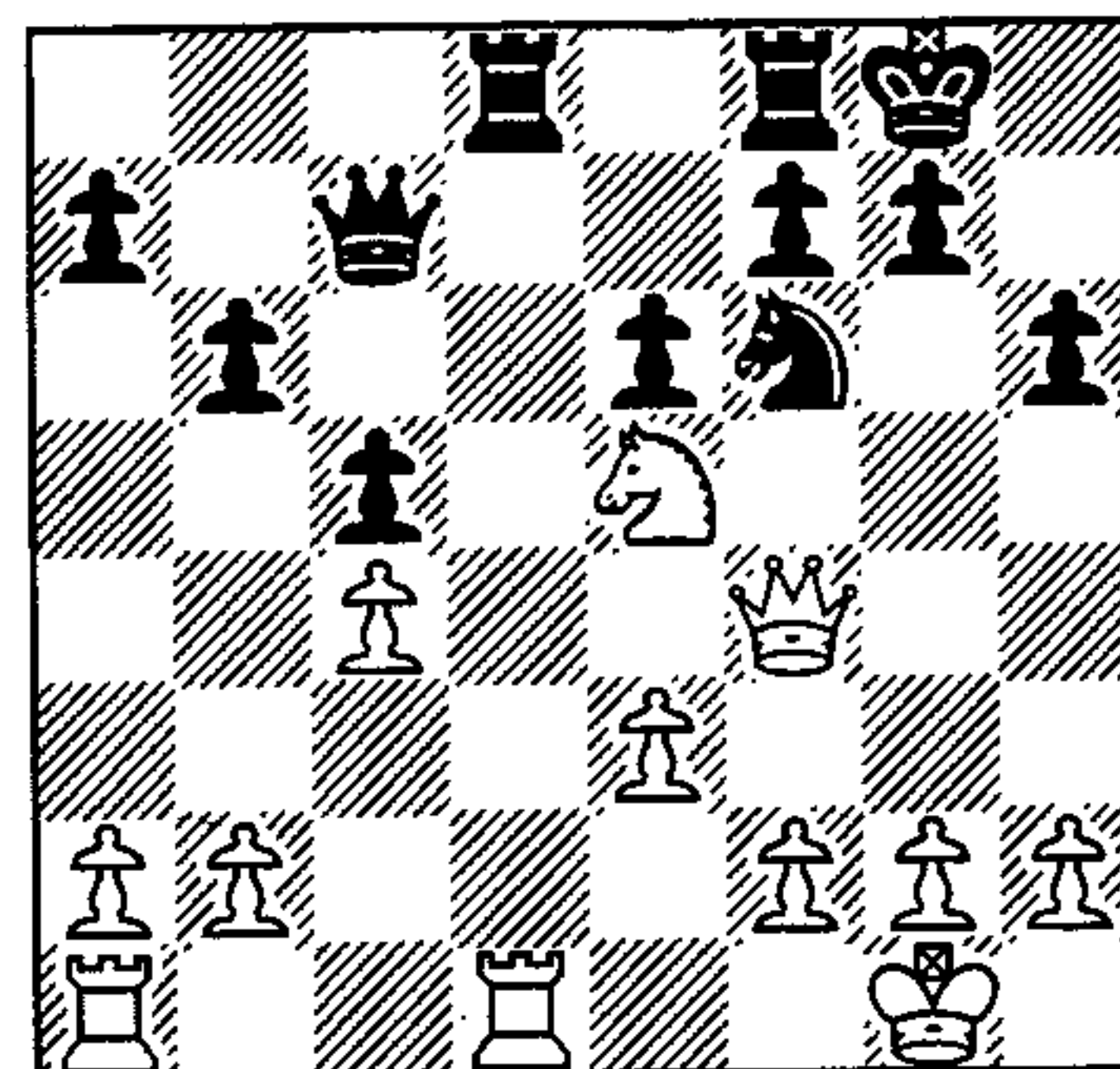
6...e4 7 b5 and White wins.

7 f3

Followed by b4-b5 with a winning pawn endgame.

7...♖d6 8 b5 axb5+ 9 ♖xb5 ♖c7 10 ♖c5 ♖b7 11 ♖d5 ♖a6 12 ♖xe5 ♖xa5 13 ♖f6 and so on.

Exercise 100: White to move
Salov-Ehlvest
Skellefå 1989

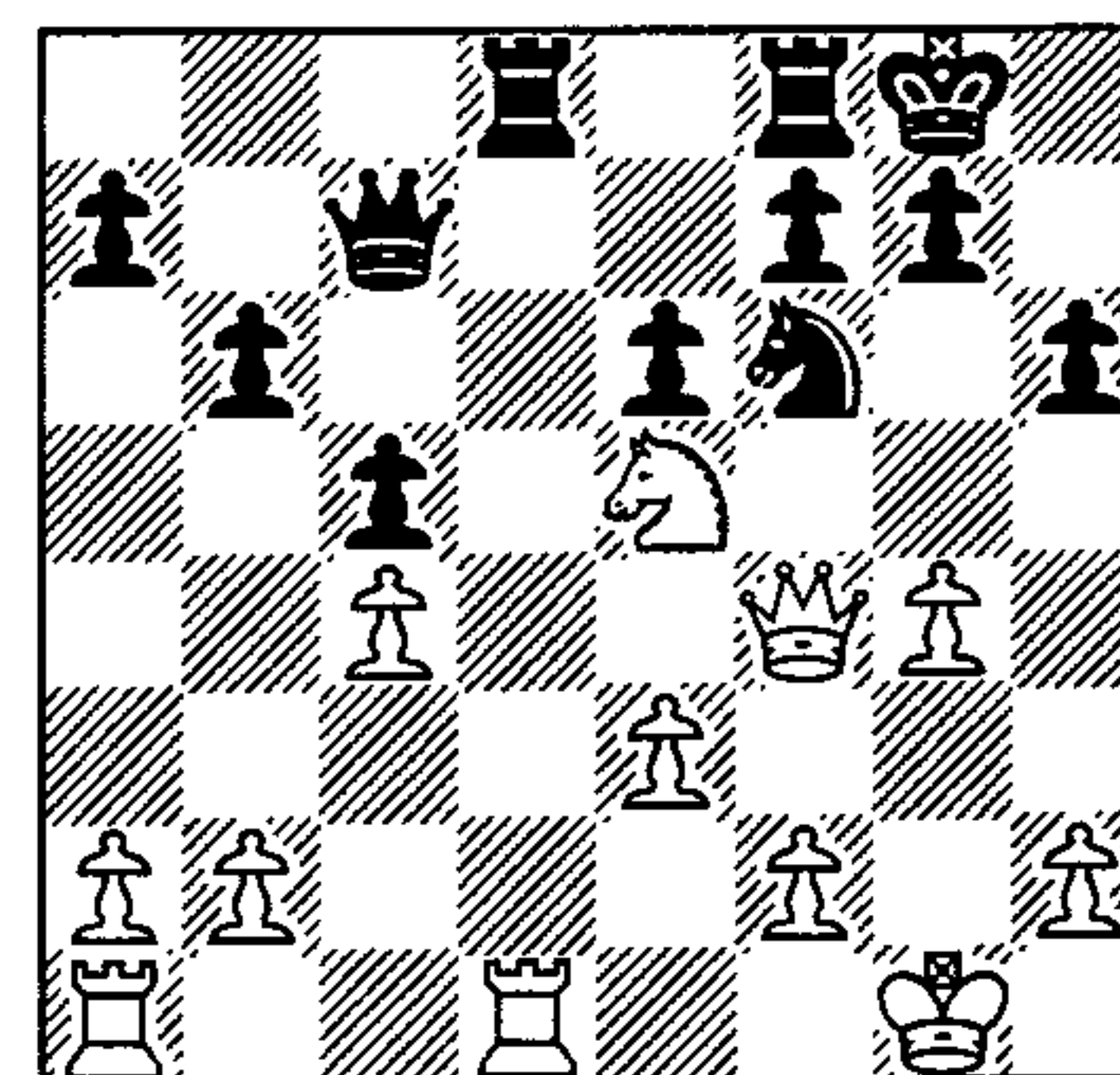


Apparently White has a strong posi-

tion. He has an influential knight on e5 and the queen seems well posted on f4, while both target f7, one of the potentially weak squares in the black camp. Additionally, Black has moved his b-pawn, which creates a weakness on c6. But then when you scrape at the surface a little you realise that Black is about to exchange rooks on the d-file, after which he might gain control over what is the only open file on the board. So is the first assessment wrong? When I try to solve such positions I normally trust my initial evaluation 100%. If I cannot find a move that supports this evaluation I might take a practical decision but, mainly, I try to find something that backs up my evaluation. Here Salov found something for me.

21 g4!

Black's weakest square is f7. There is nothing else that White can seriously expect to attack. Note that problem of mate on d1 has also been addressed with this thrust. Thus, overall, White retains his advantages and solves his problems, which is enough for an edge. Instead 21 ♖g6? ♖xd1+! 22 ♖xd1 ♖d8! is horrible (now something like 23 ♖e1 is forced... urgh!).



21...♖fe8

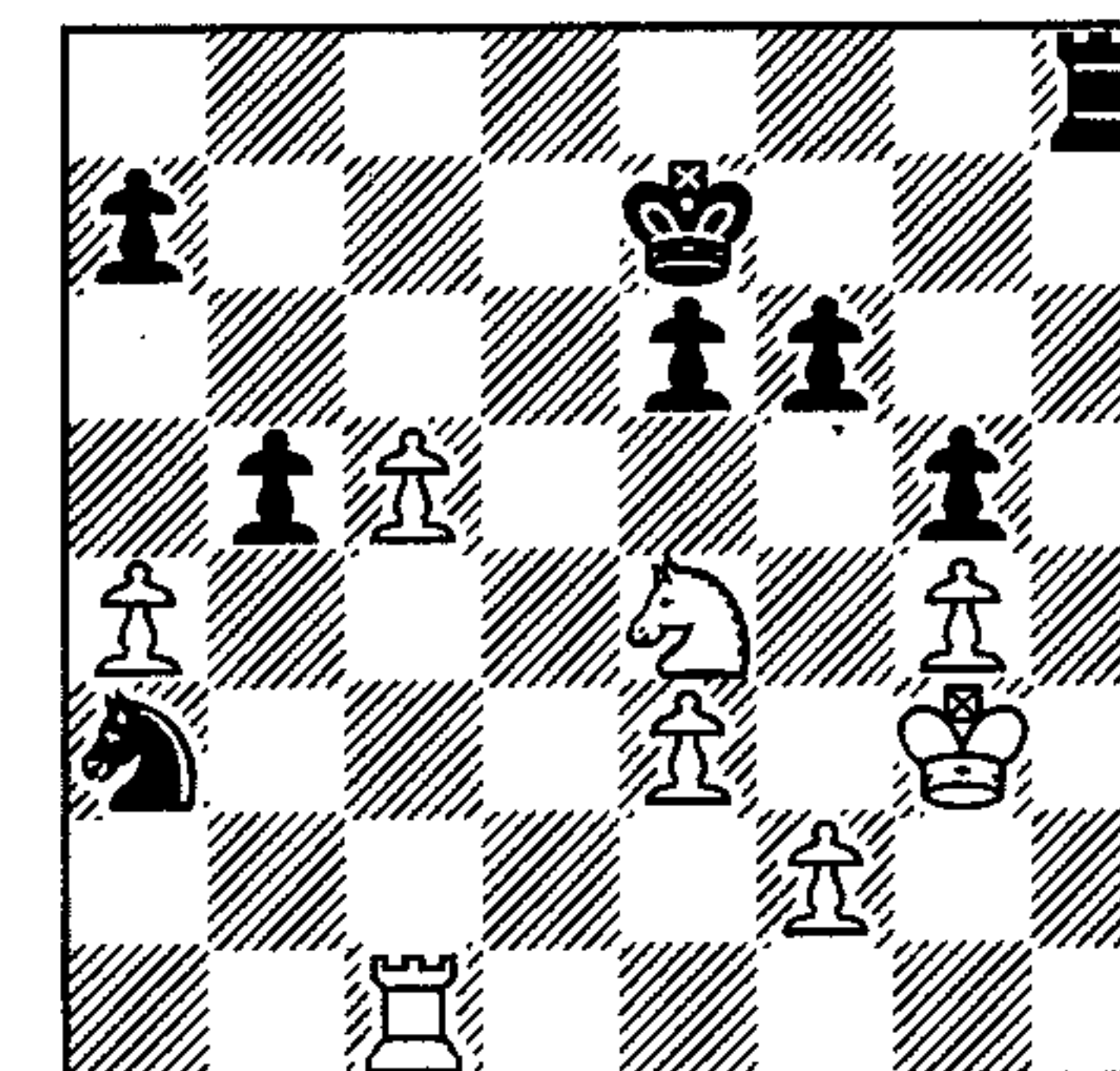
21...♖d7!? 22 ♖xd7 ♖xd7 23 ♖xc7 ♖xc7 gives White a better endgame due to the control of the open file.

22 h4 ♖h7 23 ♖g2 g5 24 hxg5 hxg5 25 ♖h2 f6 26 ♖f3 ♖xh2+ 27 ♖xh2 ♖f7 28 ♖g3 ♖f8 29 a3 ♖e7?! 30 ♖d2 ♖g6 31 ♖e4 ♖xd1 32 ♖xd1 ♖h8 33 b4! ♖e5! 34 bxc5 ♖xc4 35 ♖c1 b5! 36 a4 ♖a3?

36...a6! 37 axb5 axb5 38 ♖a1 ♖d8 would have kept the position together.

Here there is a little bonus exercise:

Exercise 101: White to move
Salov-Ehlvest
Skellefå 1989



Now it is all about the control of c8. If White just advances the c-pawn it is bound to be tamed in the near future, when Black will be able to generate counterplay on the queenside or simply make a draw as all the pawns get vacuumed off the board. With the text White takes command of c8 and simply pushes his pawn to the 8th rank.

37 ♖d1!! f5

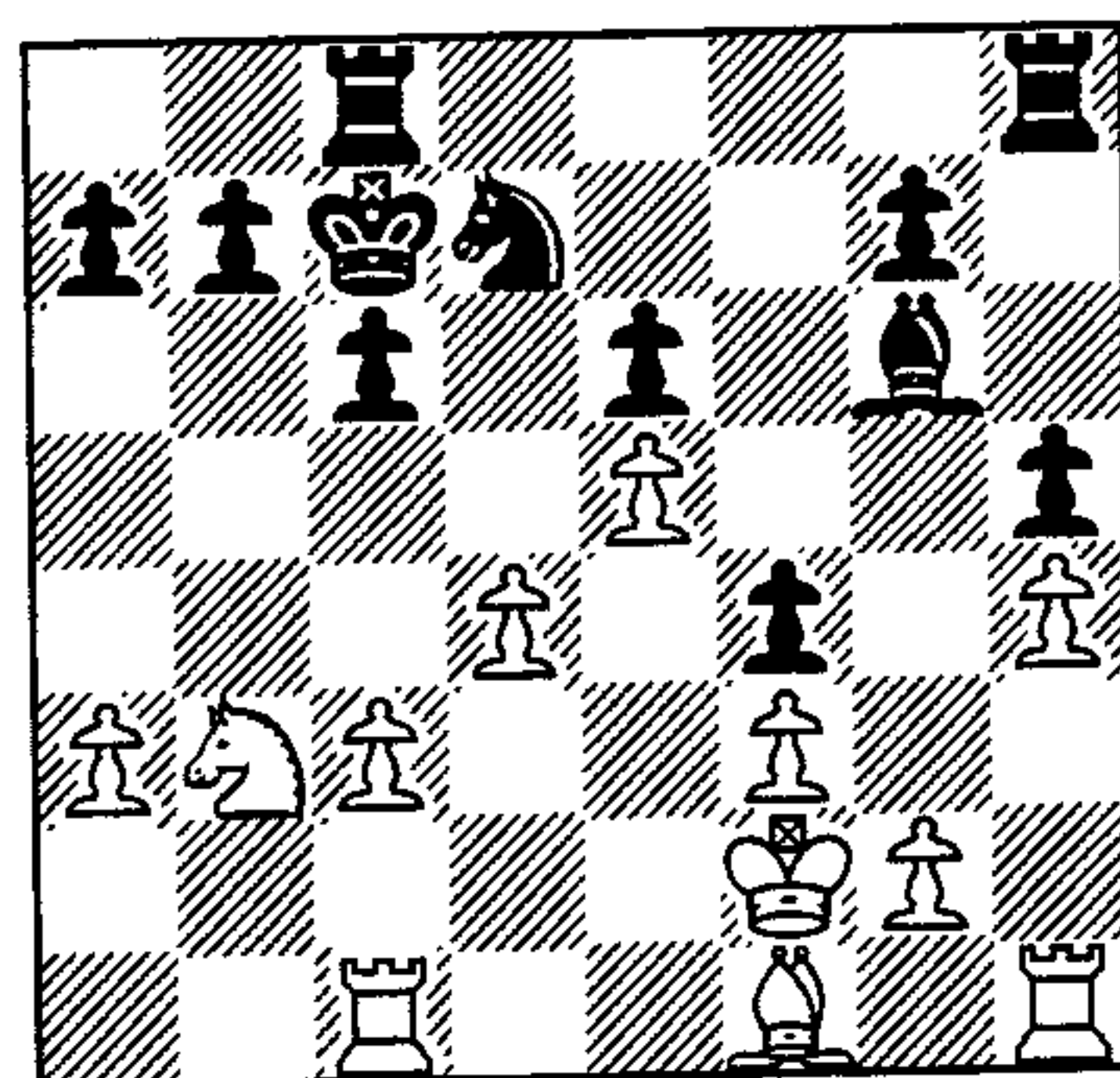
What else? 37...bxa4 38 c6 ♖d8 39 ♖h1 ♖b5 40 ♖h7+ ♖f8 41 c7 and wins, or 37...♖d8 38 ♖h1 e5 39 ♖h7+ ♖e6 40

♖xa7 and Black is in big trouble. Finally after 37...♖c8 38 ♖h1! there is, apparently, no decent continuation for Black. **38 gxf5 exf5 39 ♖d6 f4+ 40 exf4 gxf4+ 41 ♖g4!**

Preventing counterplay, which might result from 41 ♖xf4 ♖h4+ 42 ♖g5 ♖xa4 43 c6 ♖d8!, when Black has reasonable chances of saving the game.

41...bxa4 42 c6 ♖c2 43 c7 ♖e6 43...a3 44 ♖f5+.
44 ♖e8! ♖xe8 45 ♖d8 1-0

Exercise 102: White to move
Kramnik-Hertneck
Germany 1995



Perhaps this is difficult to solve, but it is easy to explain. White has a very poor piece on h1 and needs to activate it. Ideally White would like an open file, which does not exist at the moment. If only the g-file were open – then we could target g7...

21 ♖g1! ♖cf8?!

21...♖f5 22 g3 fxf3+ 23 ♖xg3 ♖cg8 (23...g6 24 ♖h3 leaves g6 seriously weakened) 24 ♖e2! (24 ♖h3 allows the unnecessary 24...♖xh3 25 ♖xh3 g5, although White is probably better after 26 hxg5 ♖xg5 27 ♖ch1 followed by a

knight manoeuvre to e4) 24...g6 25 ♖d2 with a clear advantage to White, whose pieces have excellent squares at their disposal, while Black is left trying to keep his game together.

22 g3 ♖f5

Black is forced to give up the pawn now. 22...fxg3+ 23 ♖xg3 ♖h6 24 ♖c4 ♖f4 25 ♖xe6 ♖xh4 26 ♖xd7 ♖xd7 27 ♖cg1 and White wins, while 22...♖h6 23 ♖c4!? looks similar.

23 gxf4 ♖f7 24 c4 ♖b8 25 d5! cxd5 26 cxd5 ♖b6

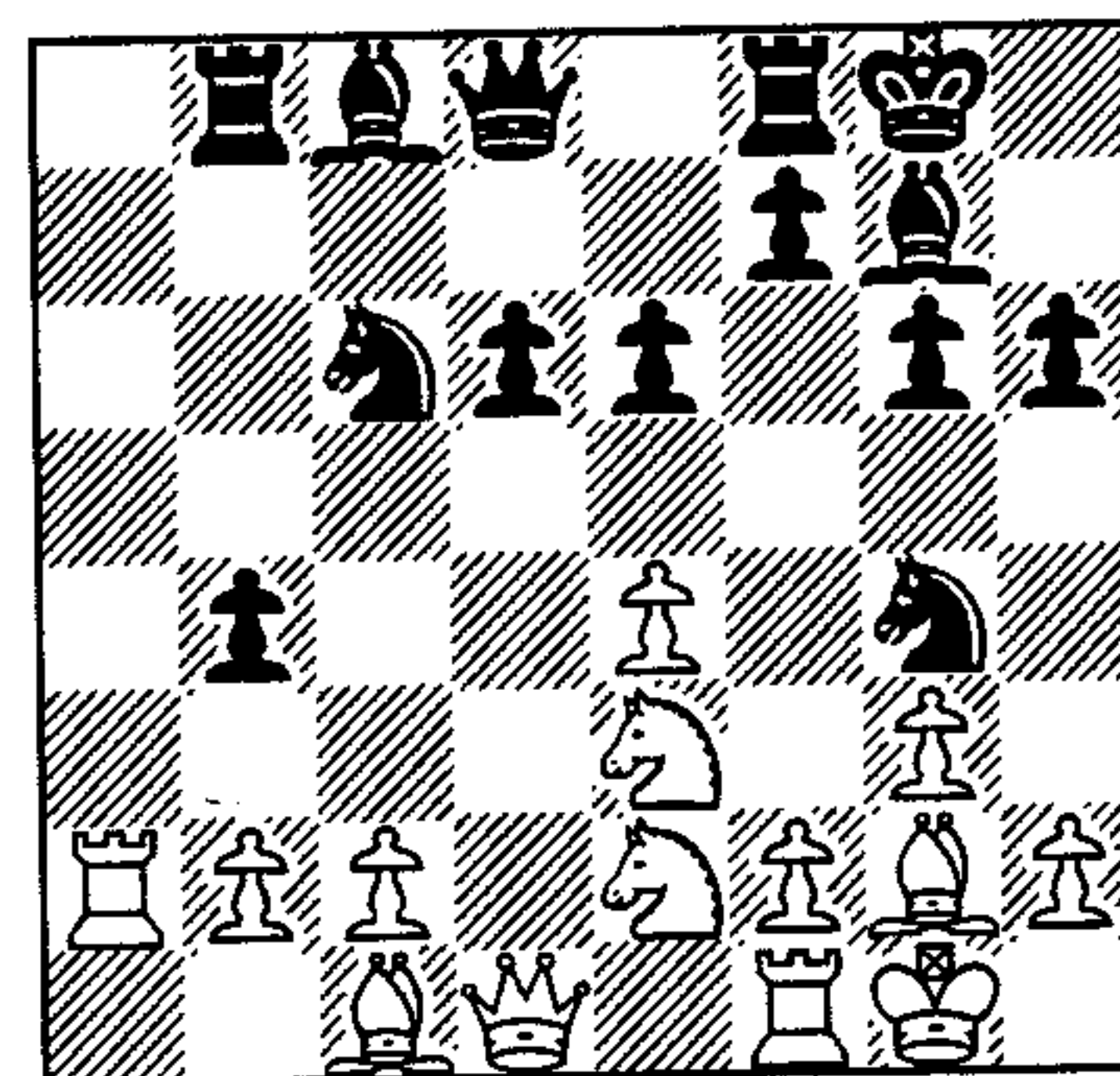
After 26...exd5 White's forces enjoy new found freedom with 27 ♖d4 ♖b6 (27...♖f8 28 ♖xf5 ♖xf5 29 ♖h3, or 27...♖e8 28 ♖xf5 ♖xf5 29 ♖h3 etc.) 28 e6 ♖f6 29 ♖xg7 ♖xe6 30 ♖xe6 ♖xe6 31 ♖cc7 and Black is busted.

27 d6

White has a decisive positional advantage.

27...♖d5 28 ♖d4 ♖hf8 29 ♖g3! ♖g4 30 fxg4 ♖xf4 31 ♖xe6 ♖xg4+ 32 ♖h2 ♖xh4+ 33 ♖h3 1-0

Exercise 103: Black to move
Ivanchuk-Kramnik
Horgen 1995



Here Black can play 17...♖f6 with an

equal position. But the pawn sacrifice is far more interesting.

17...b3!

With this move Black creates several weaknesses in the white camp, namely b2, b3 and d3. Both b-pawns are likely to fall eventually and, with the bishop on a6, he will be able to put White under severe pressure.

18 cxb3 ♖ge5

This is the position Black was heading for. If you look for the ideal squares for the white pieces you will not really find any. There are no weak squares in Black's camp besides d6, and there is no convenient way for White to get his pieces to attack d6.

19 ♖d2!

Ivanchuk decides to improve his most inactive piece, which is the right course of action in a position under pressure like this. An important detail is that 19 f4?! meets with 19...♖b4! 20 ♖a3 ♖ed3 with the beginning of an invasion. 19 ♖a3 ♖b6! 20 ♖c4 ♖xc4 21 bxc4 ♖xb2 looks slightly better for Black, while 19 ♖c4 ♖b4 20 ♖a3 ♖ed3 followed by ...d6-d5 will deprive White of his only good square for a knight.

19...♖b6 20 ♖c3 ♖a6 21 ♖d2 ♖xe2! 22 ♖xe2 ♖d4 23 ♖xd4

Forced. 23 ♖d1?! ♖xb3 24 ♖xb3 ♖e2+! 25 ♖h1 ♖xb3 is clearly better for Black.

23...♖xd4 24 ♖d1 ♖c5 25 ♖a6?

25 ♖d2! ♖fd8 26 ♖a6 ♖xb3 27 ♖xd6 ♖xd6 28 ♖xd6 ♖xd6 29 ♖xd6 was the safe path to a draw.

25...♖xb3 26 ♖axd6 ♖xb2 27 ♖6d2 ♖fb8! 28 ♖c2! ♖8b3!? 29 ♖dd2?

29 ♖xc5! ♖xe2 30 ♖c2 ♖xc2 (30...♖bxe3 31 ♖c8+) 31 ♖xc2 ♖f8!? is

still not without problems for White, but a draw is the most likely result.

29...♖xc2 30 ♖xc2 ♖b1+ 31 ♖f1 ♖b6

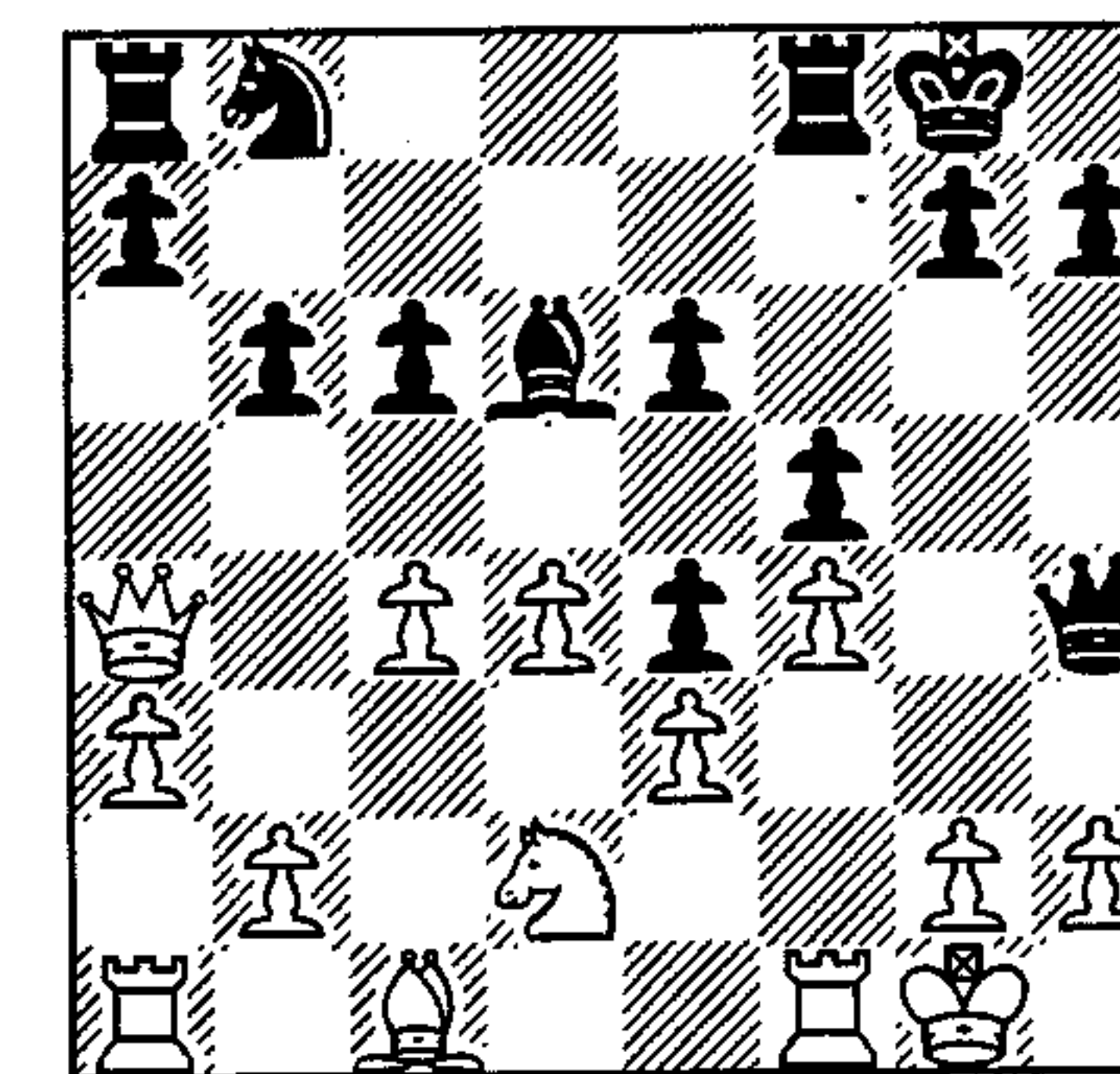
Now White is severely tangled up.

32 h3 ♖c6 33 ♖c4 ♖d4 34 ♖a2 h5 35 h4 ♖h7 36 ♖h2 ♖b4 37 ♖c1 ♖c6! 38 ♖e3 ♖h6?

38...♖e5 with the idea of ...♖h6 was much stronger.

39 f4 ♖b3 40 ♖a3! ♖b1 41 ♖a6! ♖xa6? 42 ♖xb1 ♖e2 43 ♖f1! ♖d4 44 ♖b7! ♖g8 45 ♖c8+ ♖f8 46 ♖c3 ♖g7 47 ♖e3 ♖b2 48 ♖d2 ♖b3 49 ♖e3 ½-½

Exercise 104: White to move
Kramnik-Vaganian
Horgen 1995



Here White could play 15 b4 with some advantage, but he has the opportunity to develop a serious initiative thanks to his lead in development. This, together with the great squares he can get for his pieces, as well as all the weaknesses in the black camp...

15 c5! bxc5

15...♖c7 16 cxb6 ♖xb6 17 ♖c4 is clearly better for White.

16 ♖c4 ♖e7

16...♙e7 17 dxc5 ♘d7 18 b4 gives White a clear advantage.

17 dxc5 ♙xc5 18 b4 ♙d6 19 ♙b2 ♙c7 20 ♖fd1

White stands much better. Black cannot develop freely and White needs only to play 21 ♖ac1 to dominate.

20...c5

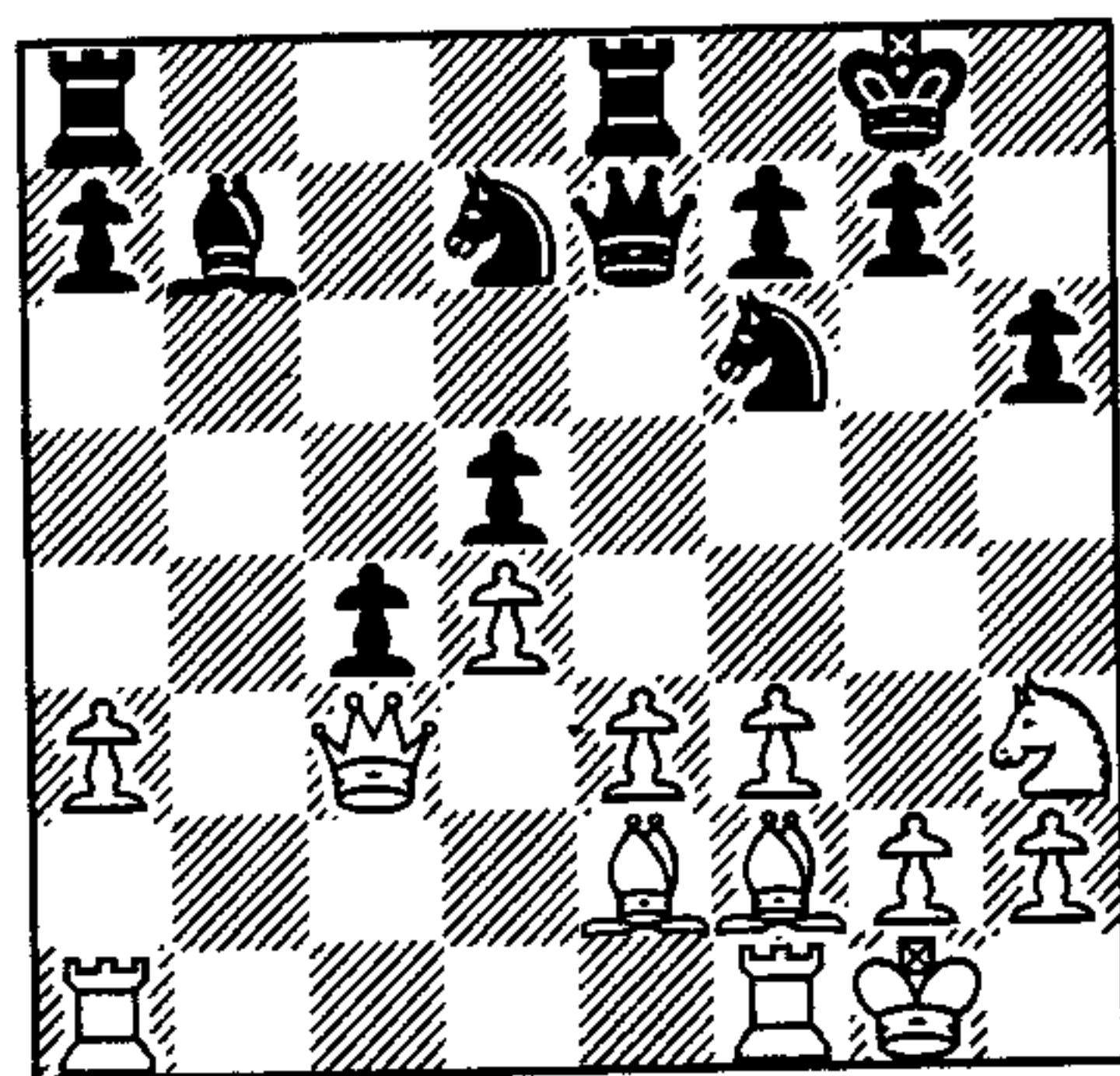
20...♘d7? 21 ♖xc6 ♘b6 22 ♘xb6 ♙xb6 23 ♖d7 and White wins.

21 bxc5 ♖xc5 22 ♖ac1 ♖e7 23 ♖b5 ♙b6 24 a4

24 ♙e5! is preferable.

24...♙c5 25 ♙d4 ♙xd4 26 ♖xd4 a6 27 ♖b6 ♖a7 28 ♘d6! ♖d7 29 ♖c8! ♖xc8 30 ♘xc8 ♖a3 31 ♖xe6+ ♙f8 32 ♖xf5+ ♙e8 33 ♖e6+ ♙d8 34 ♖b6+! ♙e8 35 ♘d6+ 1-0

Exercise 105: White to move
Kramnik-Tiviakov
Las Vegas 1999



This is a combination of the misplaced piece and prophylaxis. Black is about to play ...♘b6 and ...♙c6 to put these two pieces to good use. The idea of ...♘a4 is obvious. White would like to get all his pieces into play. His knight needs to go to f2 at some point, which means that the bishop must go to h4 or

g3. The other bishop would be better off on c2. White might consider the advance e3-e4 but, currently, all the black pieces are posted to prevent this, and playing it would open up for them in the most self-destructive way.

18 ♙d1!

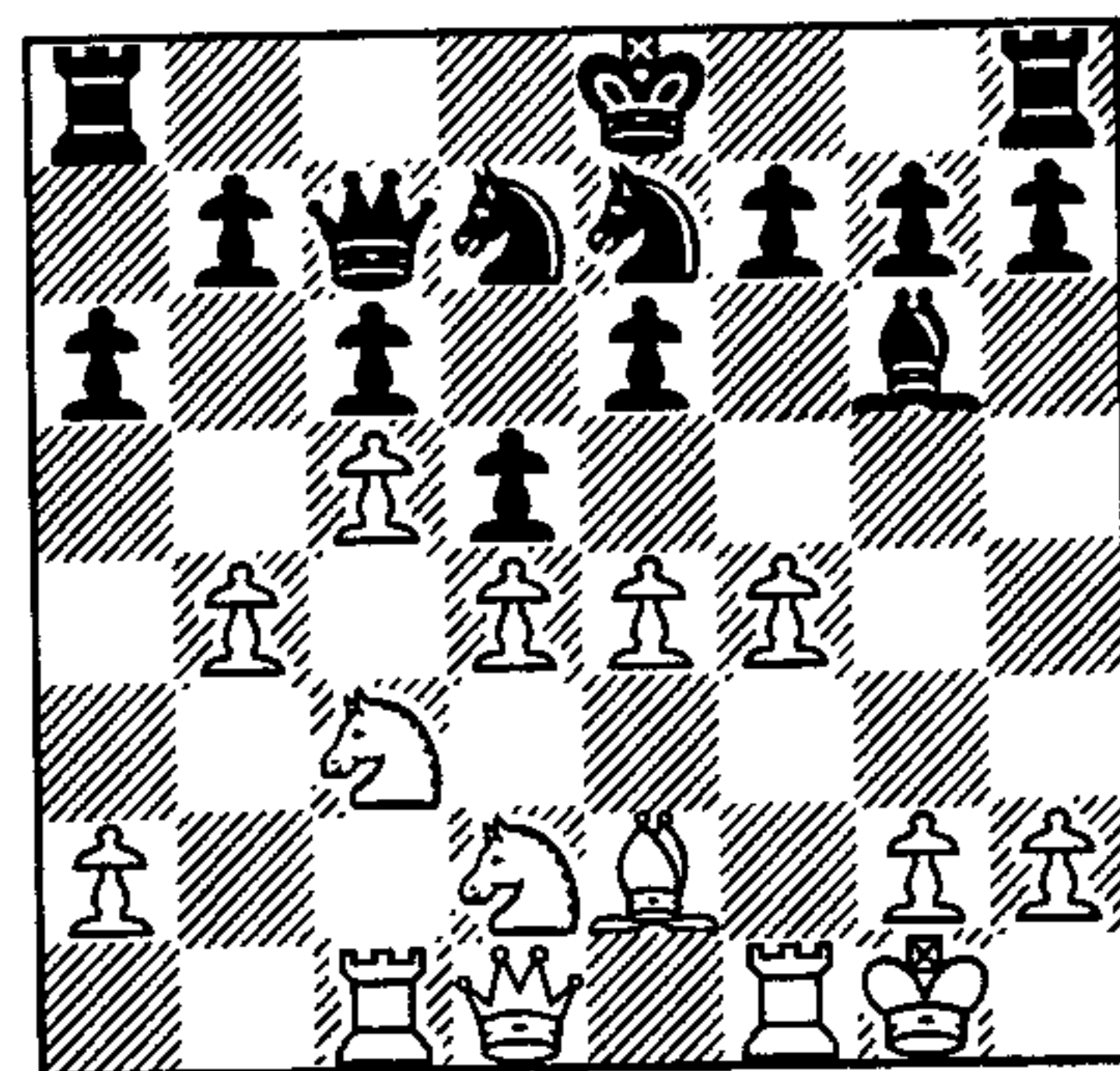
Intending a3-a4 after 18...♙c6 and 19...♘b6. In this way White keeps his queenside together while manoeuvring on the kingside.

18...♘b6 19 ♙c2 ♙c6 20 a4

White stands better.

20...♖d7?! 21 a5 ♘c8 22 ♙h4! ♘h7 23 ♘f2 ♘d6 24 ♘g4! ♘f5 25 ♙f2 f6 26 h3! ♘d6 27 ♖fe1 ♖ac8 28 e4! ♘b5 29 ♖d2 h5 30 ♘e3 dxe4 31 d5 f5? 32 ♘xf5! ♖xd5? 33 ♖xd5+ ♙xd5 34 ♙a4! a6 35 ♙xb5 axb5 36 fxe4! ♙c6 37 ♘d6 ♘f6 38 a6!? c3 39 a7 c2 40 e5 ♘e4 41 ♘xe8 ♖xe8 42 ♖ec1 1-0

Exercise 106: White to move
Kramnik-Topalov
Dortmund 1999



The situation in this position can be explained quite simply as being a matter of future structures, and how the minor pieces work with them. If Black is al-

lowed to take on e4 he will secure both f5 and d5 for his knights and White will have three weak pawns on b4, d4 and f4 – in other words White will be worse. If White decides to take on d5 to avoid this he will still have to concede the f5-square (or weaken his king and the f-pawn with g2-g4) and probably also the e4-square (due to the d5-pawn), while the weakness of e3 becomes apparent. With these alternatives it seems natural to sacrifice a pawn to deprive Black of all these squares and simultaneously create a majority on the queenside.

16 f5! exf5 17 exd5 cxd5?!

This recapture leaves the e7-knight rather poor, while the knight on c3 is clearly perfectly placed. Black had no choice but to play 17...♘xd5 18 ♘xd5 (18 ♘c4 ♘xc3 19 ♖xc3 0-0 20 ♘d6 ♘f6 seems equal) 18...cxd5 19 ♖b3 ♘f6 20 ♘f3 0-0 21 ♘e5, when White has good compensation for the pawn but Black does not have the space problems he experiences in the game.

18 b5 0-0 19 b6 ♖d8?!

19...♖c8! is necessary in order to keep an eye on the light squares on the queenside, which is where White now gets a powerful attack.

20 ♘b3

On the way to the ideal square.

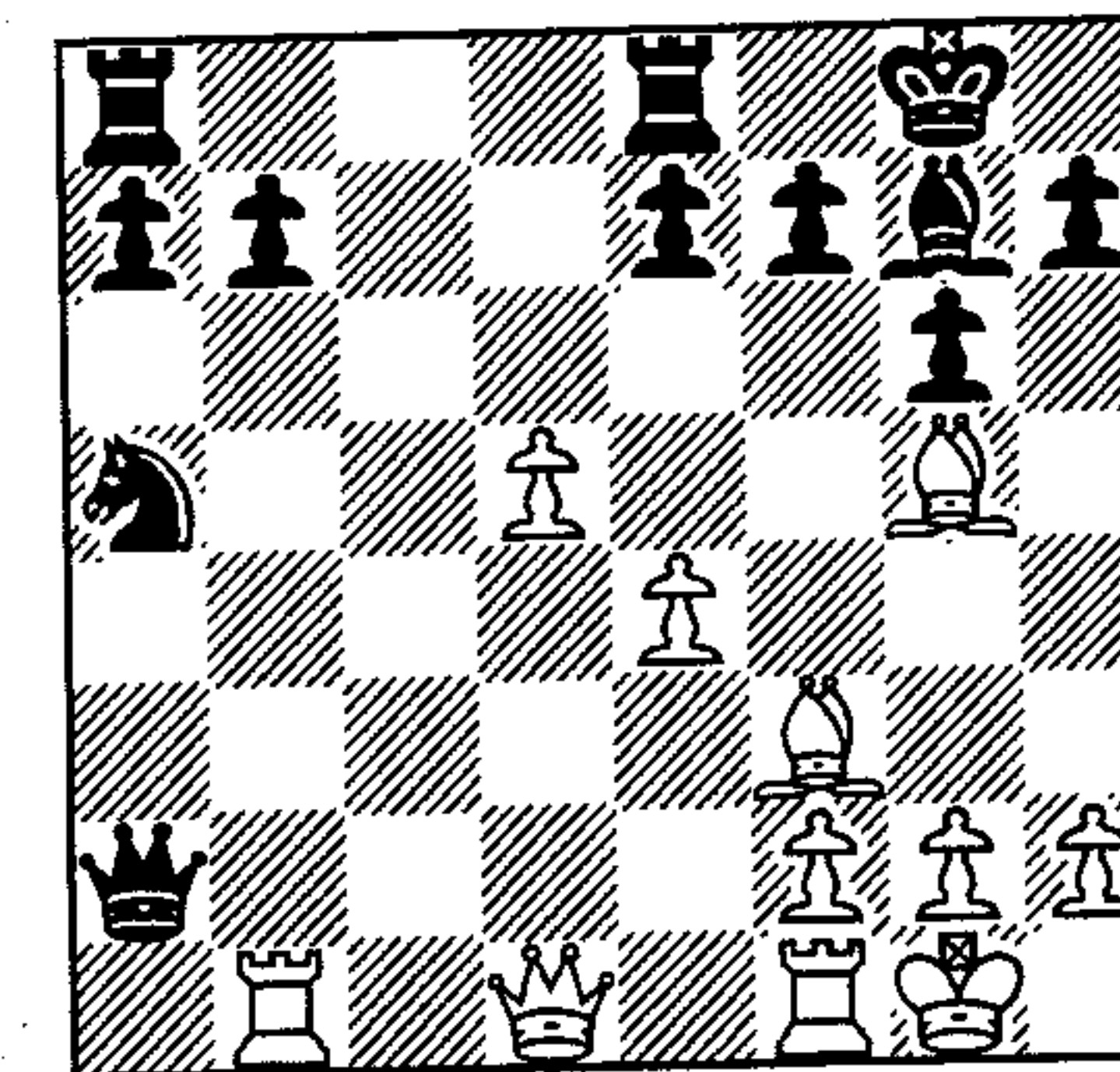
20...♘f6 21 ♘a5 ♖b8 22 a4 ♘e4 23 ♘a2!

White plans to win on the queenside, and it is not apparent how Black is going to stop him.

23...f6 24 ♘b4 ♙e8 25 ♖c2 g6 26 ♖b1 ♖f7 27 ♘xb7 ♖xb7 28 a5 ♘c6 29 ♘xc6 ♙xc6 30 ♙xa6 ♖b8 31 ♙b5 ♖c8 32 ♙xc6 ♖xc6 33 a6 ♙g7 34 ♖b4 ♘d6 35 ♖a4 ♖xa4 36

♖xa4 ♘c8 37 ♖b4 ♘a7 38 bxa7 ♖a8 39 c6 ♖axa7 40 ♖c1 1-0

Exercise 107: White to move
Kramnik-Svidler
Linares 1999



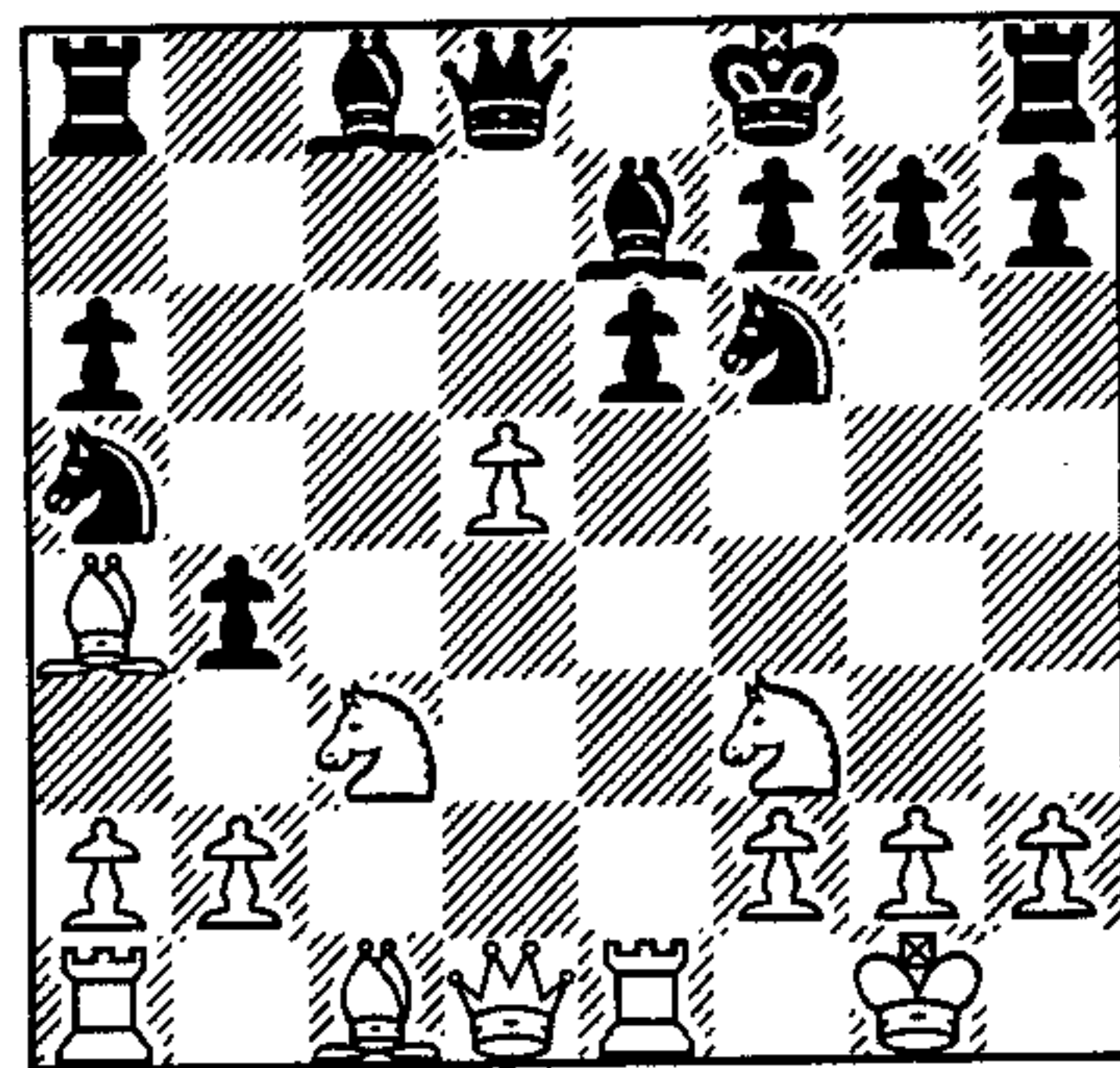
We arrive here via a razor-sharp line in the Grünfeld Defence in which White sacrifices a pawn in order to gain a lead in development, a potential passed pawn on the d-file, put the black queen in trouble and, often, secure the bishop pair. By now the opening has just about come to an end and it is time for White to find a natural way to get his initiative rolling. For if Black is given the time he will consolidate his extra pawn, improve his co-ordination and maybe even win the game. The main problem for White is that the f1-rook and f3-bishop have little scope. The solution to this problem, then, is to try to push the d-pawn with a pawn sacrifice.

17 e5! ♘c4

Now White is a whole lot better. But 17...♙e5 also looks dangerous, when one way to gain a clear advantage is 18 d6!? ♙xd6 19 ♖a1 ♖c4 20 ♖xa5 ♙xh2+ 21 ♙h1 and the active white

pieces will pick off Black's weak pawns and perhaps mount a kingside attack
18 d6 ♖xe5 **19** ♔d5! ♚a3 **20** ♜xe7
 ♙f8 **21** ♙xb7 ♙xe7 **22** ♙xa8 ♙xd6
23 ♙d5 ♜e7 **24** ♚h1 h5 **25** h3 ♚g7
26 ♚d2 ♙c7 **27** ♜bd1 ♖d7? **28**
 ♙xf7! ♜xf7 **29** ♚xd7 ♜xd7 **30**
 ♜xd7+ ♚h6 **31** ♜xc7 ♚d3 **32** ♚g1
 ♚d4? **33** ♜c2 1-0

Exercise 108: White to move
Kramnik-Karpov
 Frankfurt 1999



White has put all his chips on the blood red colour of the initiative. When you opt for a dynamic advantage over the static (long-term) advantages that your opponent is most likely accumulating along the way you cannot drop your pace. Here White will only just keep an equal game after 14 ♖e4, but this move is irrelevant as there is another move that should work – unless White really is worse. But why should White be worse? He is better developed, better co-ordinated, his king is safer and he has sacrificed nothing thus far.

14 ♙f4!

This is the logical move. An inactive piece is brought into the battle, adding

to the pressure.

4...bxc3

There was a possible alternative in 14...♖xd5 15 ♖xd5 ♚xd5 16 ♚xd5 exd5 17 ♜ac1, when White keeps the initiative without the queens. Or here 15...exd5 16 ♜c1 and White wins material, one line being 16...♜a7 17 ♜xe7! ♜xe7 18 ♚xd5 ♙d7 19 ♖e5 and Black is busted. Alternatively, 14...exd5 15 ♖e2 followed by ♖ed4 leaves White with long-term dynamic compensation as Black is uncoordinated.

15 d6 ♖d5

The alternative 15...cxb2 might look strong, but it all depends on finding the right moves. This normally means that you do not take any moves for granted, but look for options on every move. Here White is close to winning after 16 dxe7+ ♚xe7 17 ♚c2! etc.

16 dxe7+ ♚xe7 17 ♙e5!

Keeping up the pressure. It is not easy for Black to free himself. 17 ♚xd5? exd5 18 ♙d6 ♙e6! 19 ♙xe7+ ♚xe7 20 bxc3 ♜hc8 favours Black.

17...♙b7

17...cxb2 18 ♙xb2 ♖c4 19 ♙d4! with very strong compensation for the pawn. In practice White will be a rook up for about five to ten moves. If he plays with enough vigour this should at some point be translated into a permanent advantage. 19 ♙xg7+?! ♚xg7 20 ♚xd5 exd5 21 ♜xe7, with a very slight advantage, is Huzman's line.

18 bxc3 ♜d8?! 19 ♖d4 ♖c4? 20
 ♙xg7+! ♚xg7 **21** ♖f5+ exf5 **22**
 ♜xe7 ♖xe7 **23** ♚e2! ♖g6 **24** ♚xc4
 ♜d2 **25** ♙b3 ♙d5 **26** ♚xa6 ♜d8 **27**
 ♙xd5 ♜8xd5 **28** h3 ♖e5 **29** a4 f4
30 a5 f3 **31** ♚b7 fxg2 **32** a6 1-0