THE
MODERN CHESS INSTRUCTOR

BY WILHELM STEINITZ

FOREWORD BY ANDY SOLTIS

Modern Chess Instructor

Parts I & II

by

Wilhelm Steinitz

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Foreword

Suppose that when Magnus Carlsen writes his first book, it is *not* a collection of his best games. Instead, he writes a vast, comprehensive work for players of all classes – from experienced tournament players down to novices who don't even know how the pieces move. In this remarkable book he reveals his opening secrets, his positional insights – and just about everything else he has discovered about chess.

Yes, I know that's not going to happen. World-class players rarely write any kind of books these days, and certainly not books for readers from a wide range of playing strengths. But they did write that way, once upon a time.

That time gave us Emanuel Lasker's *Manual of Chess* and its great predecessor, Wilhem Steinitz's *Modern Chess Instructor* (MCI). So much of what we take for granted in chess thinking comes from MCI that we need to put it in context to appreciate it fully.

Underlying MCI is Steinitz's explanation – and fervent defense – of what he called the "Modern School." Its basic tenets: The ultimate objective of chess is to capture the opponent's king *but that should not be the primary goal*. Attacks cannot defeat proper defense unless they are founded on some previously acquired positional superiority, such as better development, pawn structure or piece mobility.

This was revolutionary at the time. The popular view was that a brilliant sacrifice stemmed from the genius of the player who made it. No, said Steinitz in MCI. It "can only occur when either side has committed some grave error of judgment."

This outraged many fans who accused Steinitz's plodding approach of taking the fun out of chess. He may be world champion, they said, but he is no Paul Morphy – who was widely regarded as the greatest player of all time. Steinitz replied, in Chapter Six of MCI, that Morphy rarely sacrificed in his celebrated matches against masters. It was patzers who allowed Morphy to be brilliant, he implied.

Many readers will find Chapter Seven to be the most interesting. Steinitz explains his views on piece values and pawn theory. He was writing at a time when the superiority of a bishop over a knight was still in dispute. Here he goes further, telling the world of the great value of the two bishops: They are far superior to two knights and a bit better than ♗+♘. In fact, two bishops and two pawns are much better than ♖+♘. In this chapter he also hails the importance of a queenside pawn majority, which was little appreciated at the time. Steinitz also elaborates on pawn "holes," a term he originated, and other pawn weaknesses – again, little understood in his era.

The bulk of MCI is devoted to opening analysis and annotated games that illustrate the analysis. This contrasts sharply with modern opening books. Today's works typically contain one percent original analysis. The rest is citations of hundreds of recent games. The author's contribution to opening theory is minimal. In fact, it may not be his own – but rather his computer's.

But MCI is filled with original Steinitz ideas. This may be why Bobby Fischer was his greatest 20th century fan. Fischer was always looking for forgotten opening moves. In MCI and Steinitz's *International Chess Magazine* he found some that he later revived in tournaments, such as 9.♘h3 in the main line of the Two Knights Defense and 5.♕e2 in the Petroff (after 1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘f6 3.d4 e×d4 4.e5 ♘e4).

Of course, the opening analysis of MCI is dated and the openings are out of fashion. But unpopular openings are not necessarily bad openings. Ask Magnus Carlsen. When he played 1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗c4 ♗c5 4.0-0 against Sergey Karjakin in 2016 title match, it was the first time these moves had appeared in more than a century of world championship games.

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Andy Soltis
New York
January 2017

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Preface

The chief purport of the work on chess, of which the present volume forms the first part, is the theoretical application of new principles and of the reasoning by analogies of positions, which have been my guide in practice, especially during the last 20 years. It is perhaps unnecessary to state that the task, which I have set before me was beset with enormous difficulties. Many variations that have been the product of vast changes in the style of play which has taken place in modern times, have no doubt been duly noticed in able treatises on the game, but no attempt has yet been made in any book on chess to base the analysis systematically on general ideas which would assist the judgment of the student in similar positions.

In the present work great efforts are essayed in that direction, especially in the annotation of Illustrative Games from practical play where the results of the application of the principles recommended for the conduct of the openings and the middle part can be more distinctly traced in the end. But as will be seen from the few examples given in this volume, of reasoning out the opening moves by comparison of different maxims, it would have been practically impossible within the scope of this work to adopt the same sort of commentating throughout the analysis of the openings, and I had to confine myself in that respect to pointing out the most striking examples of the adaptation of principles in the early part of the game.

However, I have carefully examined the debuts treated in this volume on the basis of such general maxims, and as the openings have been hitherto analysis by the authorities chiefly in an empirical manner, it became necessary to introduce a very large number of novelties at various stages of variations which, up to the present, had been generally recognized as standard lines of play. In short I have come to conclusions differing very widely from those hitherto sanctioned by first class practitioners and authors right at the roots of the openings, and sometimes as early as on the third or fourth moves, like in the Ruy Lopez, Petroff's Defense, and Philidor's Defense.

The analysis of the openings had therefore to be entirely remodeled in many instances in which new ideas are developed that have never been put to any practical test. Most of the experimental deductions, which I introduce to students of the game, must therefore be regarded only as imaginary examples of tactics and strategy, which I trust will in the main afford good instruction to the reader, by cannot lay any claim to absolute accuracy. For it ought to be remembered that the merits of most of the recognized standard variations in the openings could not be settled until they had been verified by numerous illustrations from the practice of first-class masters in actual play, and that grave errors have often been found in various forms of openings that have been greatly favored by many prominent practitioners and authorities for a very long time.

Under these circumstances I must expect that occasionally some shortcomings of demonstrations, such as quicker ways of winning or drawing, and perhaps some faults of judgment may have crept into some of the numerous original lines of play, which after conscientious examination, to the best of my ability, I have thought it my duty to introduce into this treatise. But I trust that such flaws will be found in a minority by far and that at any rate the innovations, which I propose will give material for practical trials and theoretical researches that will be useful for the development of our scientific pastime.

For the game department I have chiefly selected striking examples of brilliant combinations in the conduct of the kingside attack for, as a matter of course, their study is quite indispensable to the learner. As only very few of the innovations, which I propose have been tested in actual play, it is only natural that I could not give many practical illustrations of the application of modern principles. But just because the examples quoted from old masters do not generally conform with the maxims of development and the precautions of modern play which are laid down in the treatise, they afford earlier and more brilliant opportunities for the display if ingenuity in the direct kingside attack, and as the amendments on the basis of more modern ideas are pointed out in the notes as much as possible within the scope of this volume, I feel satisfied that the study of the game department will at least afford as much instruction to the large majority of readers as the perusal of the analysis. As far as practicable, I have endeavored to supplement in the examples from actual play any important variations that had been omitted in the main analysis.

As regards the arrangement of the matter presented in this volume I have introduced several new improvements with the view of giving greater facilities for following the analysis and studying the Illustrative Games. The most notable novelty in that respect is the addition of diagrams in the analytical pages, which I trust will have the desired effect.

The various authorities quoted in this treatise have been of great assistance to me in forming the outlines of this treatise, and I am also much indebted to them for some parts of my analysis and annotations, as well as for the greater portion of the selected games. But as I did not wish to introduce any kind of controversy I have

deemed it advisable to quote them only when I quite agreed with their demonstrations, and in very rare cases when I accepted the latter but differed from their conclusions without adding any analytical proof. It is, however, only due in this preface to acknowledge my general obligations to those authorities and to bring them fully to the notice of amateurs who wish to form chess libraries.

They are principally *Bilguer's Handbuch des Schachspiels*; edited by Baron von Heydebrand und der Lasa (Leipzig, Veit & Co.); *Teoria e Practica*, by Signor Salvioli (Venice, O. R=Ferrari); Führer durch die Schachtheorie, by Oscar Cordel (Berlin, Julius Springer); *Lehrbuch des Schachspiels*, by J. Dufresne (Leipzig,Ph. Reclam jun.); *The Chess Player's Manual*, by G. H. D. Gossip; *American Edition*, by S, Lipschütz (London and New York, Routledge & Co.); *Staunton' Handbook*, (Bohns Library, London); *Cook's Synopsis*, (W. W. Morgan, London); *The American Edition of same*, by J. W. Miller (Robert Clarke & Co., Cincinnati); *The London International Tournament of 1883*, by J. I. Minchin (London, Jas. Wade); *The London Chess Congress of 1862*, by J. Löwenthal (London, Henry G. Bohn); *The Chess Openings*, by Howard Staunton and R. B. Wormald (London, Virtue & Co.); *Morphy's Games*, by J. Löwenthal (London, Henry G. Bohn); and various other works on the game.

My special thanks are also due to my friend Professor Waller Holladay for his kind assistance in the revision of the MS., and the correction of proofs of this volume, which I now beg to submit to all chess students in the hope that in the main it will give general satisfaction.

Wilhelm Steinitz
New York 1889

10...0-0 (if 10...♗d7 11.♖d1 ♕c8 12.♗a3 ♘d4? 13.♗×f7+ ♔×f7 14.♘×e5+) 11.♗a3 ♖e8 12.♖fd1 ♗d7 13.♘g5.

4...♗b4+ 5.c3 d×c3 6.0-0

6.b×c3 ♗a5 7.e5 ♘ge7 8.♗a3 0-0 9.0-0 ♔h8 (if 9...h6 10.♕b3 ♗b6 11.♘bd2 ♘a5 12.♕a4) 10.♘g5 ♘×e5 11.♘×h7 ♘×c4 12.♗×e7 ♕e7 13.♕h5 g6 (D)
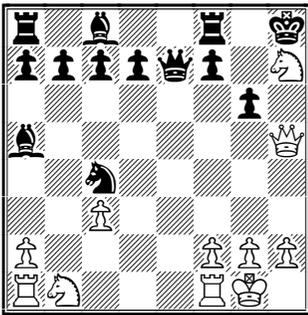
14.♕h6 ♔g8 15.♘d2 ♗×c3 16.♘g5 f6. This line is quoted from Cook's *Synopsis*.

6...c2

6...c×b2? 7.♗×b2 ♘f6 8.♘g5! (if 8.e5 ♘g4 9.h3 ♘h6 10.e6 0-0!) 8...0-0 9.e5 d5 (after 9...♘×e5 10.♗×e5 d5 11.♗e2 is White's move, for if 11.♗d3 ♘g4 12.♘f3 ♘×e5 13.♘×e5 ♕f6 14.f4 c5 and Black's passed pawns become very dangerous) 10.e×f6 d×c4 11.♕h5 h6 12.f×g7. (D)
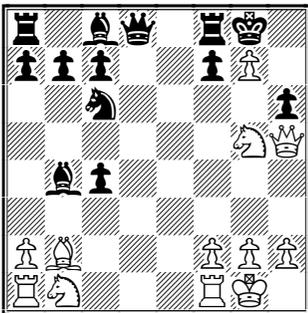
Stronger than 12.♘e4 ♖e8 13.f×g7 ♖e6 (not 13...♖×e4 14.♕×h6 ♖h4 15.♕h8+ and mate next move.) 14.♖d1 ♕e7. After the move in the text Black has no better answer than 12...♕×g5, whereupon White captures the rook, queening the pawn with a check and remains the exchange for two pawns ahead.

7.♕×c2 d6 8.a3 ♗c5 9.b4 ♗b6

If 9...♘d4 10.♕d3 ♘f6 11.b×c5 ♘×f3+ 12.♕×f3 ♕×a1 13.♕×f7+ ♔d8 14.♗g5+ and wins.

10.♕b3 ♕e7

Or 10...♕f6 11.♗b2 ♘e5 (if 11...♕g6 12.♘h4) 12.♔h1 for White afterward proceeds with ♘×e5 followed by f4.

11.♘c3 ♘f6 12.♗g5 ♗e6 13.♘d5 ♗×d5 14.e×d5 ♘e5 15.♗b5+ ♔f8 16.♖ae1 with the superior game.

In the last variations some inferior defenses are examined, chiefly by our own independent analysis, and in some variations our conclusions differ from those of former authors.

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 ♘×d4 4.♘×e5

4.♘×d4 e×d4 5.♕×d4 ♘e7 6.♗c4 ♘c6 7.♕d5 ♕f6 8.0-0 (recommended by Staunton in preference to 8.♘c3 as was played by correspondence between Edinburgh and London) 8...♘b4 9.♕d1 ♗c5.

4...♘e6 5.♘c3

(a) 5.f4:

(a1) 5...♗c5? (the chief fault of this move is that it blocks the square where the knight wanted to go to attack the weak e-pawn, or in order to effect the exchange of the important hostile light-square bishop) 6.♘f3 ♛f6 (or 6...d6 7.f5 ♘f8 8.♘c3 with the superior position.) 7.e5 ♛g6 8.♘c3 ♘e7 9.g3 ♛g4 (if 9...0-0 10.♘h4 ♛h6 11.f5 ♘g5 12.♛g4 and wins) 10.♘e4; (D)
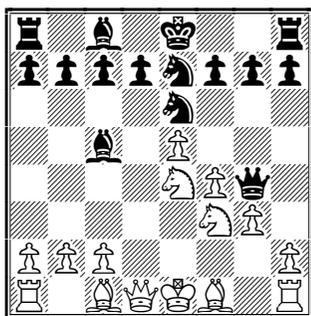

(a2) 5...♘f6! 6.♗d3 ♘c5 7.♘c3 ♘×d3+ 8.♛×d3 ♗b4 9.♗d2 0-0 10.0-0-0 d6 11.♘f3 c6. We slightly prefer Black's game on account of the two bishops;

(b) 5.♗c4 c6 6.♘×f7 (a bold and, in fact, unsound sacrifice introduced by Cochrane) 6...♚×f7 7.♗×e6+ ♚×e6 8.0-0 d5 9.♖e1 ♚f7 10.♗e3 ♗e6. (D)
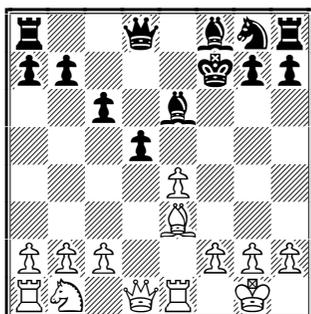
5...♗b4 6.♗d2 ♘f6 7.f3 0-0

7...d5? 8.♗b5+ c6 (if 8...♚f8 9.♘d5 ♘d5 10.e×d5 ♗×d2+ 11.♛×d2) 9.♘×c6 b×c6 10.♗×c6+ ♗d7 11.♗×a8 ♗×c3 12.♗×c3 ♛×a8 13.♗×f6 g×f6 14.e×d5 (D)
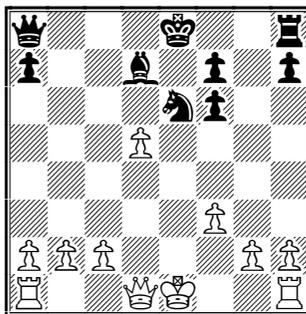
14...♘f4 15.c4 ♘×g2+ 16.♚f2 ♘f4 17.♛d4 ♘h3+ 18.♚f1.

8.♘c4 d6 9.♘e3 ♗×c3 10.♗×c3

From a game between Foring and W. Paulsen (Salvioli). White has a strong attack.

Illustrative Games

(28) Chigorin – Schiffers
St Petersburg (6), 1880 (Salvioli)

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 e×d4 4.♘×d4 ♗c5 5.♗e3 ♛f6 6.c3 ♘ge7 7.♗c4 d6

7...♘e5 8.♗e2! d5 9.f4 (or 9.♘d2 ♛g6) 9...♘c4 is, in our opinion, the best defense here, for if 10.e5 ♛h4+ (not 10...♘×e3 11.e×f6 ♘×d1 12.f×g7) 11.g3 ♘×e3 12.♛a4+ ♗d7.

8.f4 ♛g6 9.0-0 ♛×e4

The capture of this pawn was at least hazardous at this juncture.

10.♖e1 ♕g6

If 10...0-0 11.♘d2 ♕g6 12.♘b5, recovering the pawn with a strong attack.

11.♘×c6 ♗×e3+ 12.♖×e3 b×c6 13.♕e2 ♕f6 14.♘d2 d5 15.♗d3 ♗e6 16.♖f1

An excellent move which obviously prevents Black's castling at once, as he threatens to win a piece with f5.

16...g6 17.♘b3 0-0 18.g4

White might also have recovered the pawn with the better game by 18.♘c5, but as will be seen this is much stronger. He threatens again f5.

18...♖ae8 19.♘c5 d4

Weak. 19...♕h4 was his best play.

20.g5

Foreseeing the sacrifice of the exchange which White would recover with a pawn plus after 20...♕g7 21.♖×e6 f×e6 22.♘×e6 ♕f7 23.♘×f8 ♔×f8 24.c×d4, and should Black attempt 24...♕×a2, the reply 25.♗c4 followed by 26.♕e6 would win for White. But no doubt he would have chosen this line of play as the lesser evil had he perceived the fine combination which White winds up with.

20...♕h8 21.♖×e6 f×e6 22.♕×e6+ ♔g7

Of course if 22...♖f7 White wins by 23.♗c4.

23.♖e1

A masterly coup, which leaves no escape for the opponent.

23...d×c3

Of course overlooking the opponent's deep design. But he could not win the game, for if the knight removed White would win by ♖d7+.

24.♕×e7+ (D)
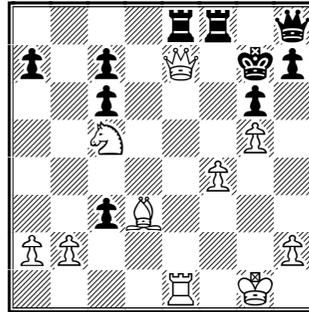
A highly ingenious and brilliant termination.

24...♖×e7 25.♖×e7+ Resigns.

Mate is forced in three more moves. And if 25.♖×e7+ ♔g8 26.♗c4+ ♖f7 27.♖e8+ and ♘e6#.

(29) Paulsen – Anderssen
Leipzig Chess Congress 1877

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 e×d4 4.♘×d4 ♗c5 5.♗e3 ♕f6 6.c3 ♘ge7 7.♗b5 0-0 8.0-0

After 8.♘×c6 b×c6 9.♗×c5 c×b5 10.0-0 d6 11.♗e3 we somewhat prefer White.

8...♗b6

Probably in order to avoid the slight disadvantage of the last note.

9.f4 d6 10.♘a3 a6

Weak on general principles, and it also drives the bishop to a more favorable spot. Much better was 10...♞×d4 11.c×d4 d5 12.e5 ♛g6.

11.♗e2 ♛g6 12.♗f3 f5

Owing to Black's weak advance of the a-pawn in the tenth move, this usually good developing resource is not available and costs a pawn.

13.e×f5 ♗×f5 14.♞×f5 ♞×f5 15.♗×b6 c×b6 16.♛b3+ ♚h8 17.♛×b6 ♛f7

Black gives up another pawn in order to lay a trap, which, however, turns out unsound.

18.♗×c6 b×c6 19.♛×c6 ♛a7+ 20.♚h1

20.♖f2 would not have been good, as Black might have replied 20...g5, and if 21.f×g5 ♞e7 and wins.

20...♞g3+

On this and the next move Black has evidently relied in forming his counterattack. But, as will be seen, White has an ingenious reply in store.

21.h×g3 ♖f6 22.♖f2 (D)
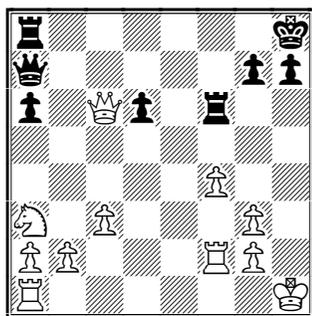
The only salvation, but also sufficient to insure victory.

22...g5 23.♛f3 g4 24.♛e2 ♖af8 25.♛d2 ♖h6+ 26.♚g1 ♖f5 27.♛d4+ and wins.

For after the exchange of queens White can easily release himself by ♖ff1, making room for ♚f2.

(30) Blackburne – Mason
Dufresne Lehrbuch Das Schachspiels

1.e4 e5 2.♞f3 ♞c6 3.d4 e×d4 4.♞×d4 ♗c5 5.♗e3 ♗×d4

This exchange is not to be recommended.

6.♗×d4 ♞f6 7.♞c3 d6 8.♗e2

White might have maintained his two bishops by 8.♗e3, and if then 8...♞g4 9.♗c1 and the knight would be driven back ultimately by f3 (Dufresne).

8...♞×d4 9.♛×d4 0-0

A decisive error, as soon appears (Dufresne).

10.0-0-0 ♗e6 11.f4

To prevent ...♗g4, which would have been Black's best answer to the move in the text, White ought to have played 11.g4, for if 11...♗×g4 12.♗×g4 ♞×g4 13.♖hg1 ♞f6 14.♞d5 ♚h8 15.♖×g7 ♚×g7 16.♖g1+ and wins.

11...a6 12.f5 ♗d7 13.g4 ♗c6 14.♖dg1

Better than playing the h1-rook, which is retained in order to support an eventual advance of the h-pawn.