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I

IN RE

The 418 SUI-MATE

SHINKMAN

1907

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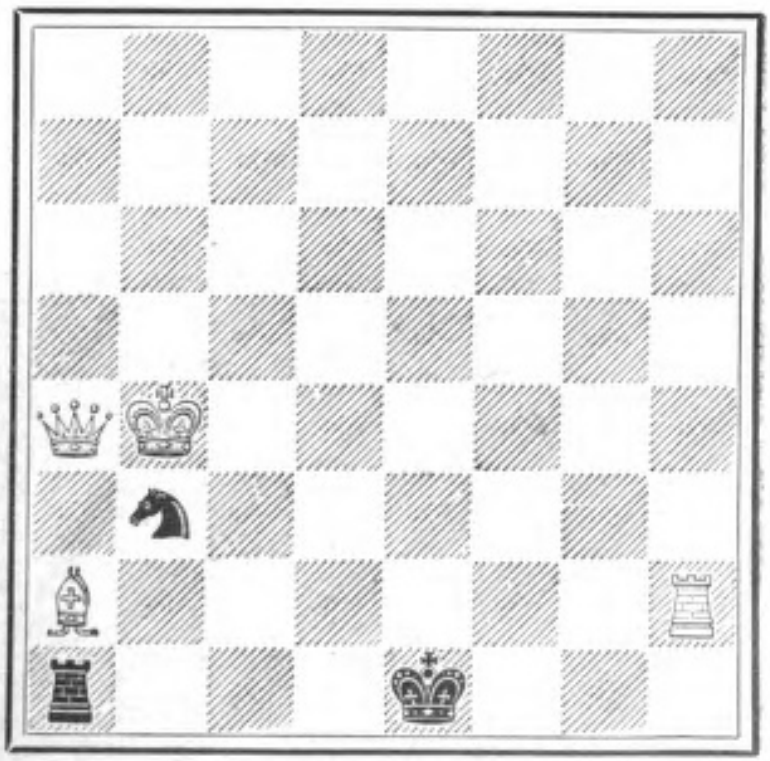
Diagram A.
Black.



White.

White to play and compel self-mate in 418 moves.

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I IN RE THE 418-MOVE SELF-MATE.

About sixteen years ago, while reviewing one day the progress of the art of problem composition, and comparing the modern chess problem with that of the old school, I fell to thinking that the time was near at hand when the ideas which go to make up the chess problem of the present day will be practically exhausted; and while speculating on what the problem of the future would or might be like, I struck a new line of thought relating to the conception and construction of chess problems and their character, which being developed, the result thereof has been more than satisfactory.

The fruits growing out of my efforts to give practical illustrations of these ideas have exceeded my highest expectations, both in the quality and quantity of the compositions embodying the principles of the new theory (if so it may be called), which principles, briefly stated, consist of a series of different maneuvers, each requiring a greater or lesser number of moves. These problems belong to a class hitherto unknown, because of their unusual characteristics; the maximum result having been attained with the minimum of force.

The study of the development of this, so to speak, new style of chess problems necessitated the giving considerable attention to the powers and properties of the different pieces, their peculiarities, singly and in combination, offensive and defensive, and to the possibilities of utilizing and developing these peculiarities and giving them expression in a striking manner in the form of problems.

One of the most interesting propositions involving one of these peculiarities may arise when white has King, Queen, Rook and **one** or **two** minor pieces against black King and Rook, the **black Rook being in a corner.** It is not a difficult matter to determine that when the Rook is otherwise placed, it will be found necessary for White

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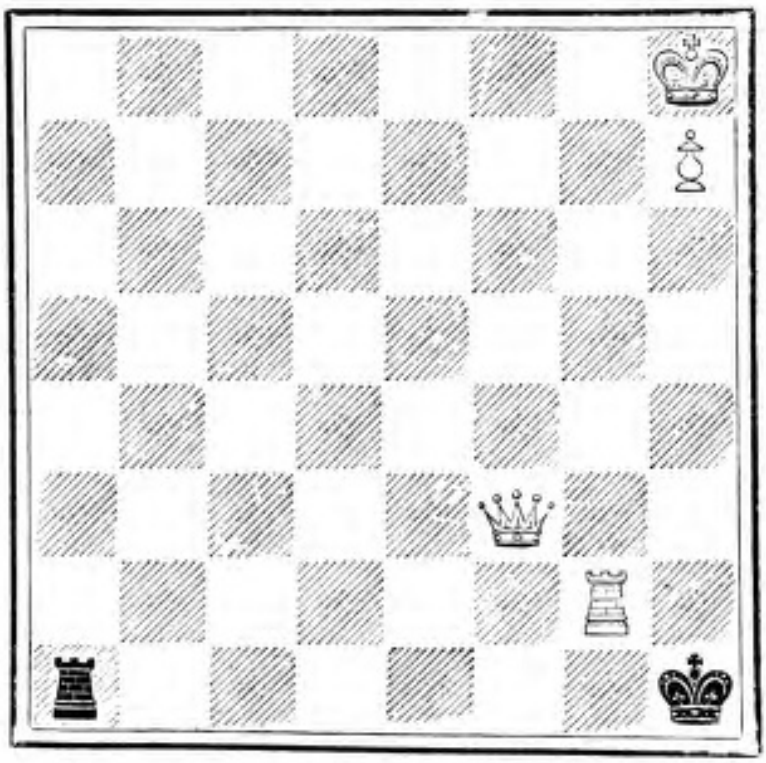
to sacrifice at least **one** piece to compel the self-mate; but when the black Rook is in the corner, the self-mate is much more difficult of accomplishment; sometimes impossible, depending upon the number of white pieces and the number of moves of the stipulation.

One of the most important conclusions deduced from a study of this interesting proposition is, that white King, Queen, Rook and only **one** other minor piece cannot force the self-mate against black King and Rook when the latter is in the corner!

It must not be forgotten that the "Rook in the corner" proposition is one that cannot be properly illustrated in a small number of moves. It is essentially a many-move idea. There are a number of simple, elementary positions in which self-mate can be forced—usually under 10 moves, but for the most part they are entirely without value. A perhaps notable exception is the following:

Diagram B.

Black.



White.

Self-mate in 30 moves.

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The above is the only position (white having only K, Q, R and one minor piece) I have been able to find. The mate can here be forced because of the weakness of the Pawn, which, in this position, is utilized as an element of strength.

Against the black King and Rook, the latter being in a corner, there are two ways in which White, with sufficient force, may compel the self-mate: suppose the black Rook to occupy a1. First, by maneuvering the white King to c8 or h3, and afterwards compelling the Rook to capture a piece at a8 or h1. Second, by forcing the black Rook out of the corner (via the sacrifice of a white piece) and pinning it at the proper moment, after which it becomes an easy matter to compel the self-mate by the sacrifice of a second piece.

The problem under consideration, self-mate in 418 moves (see diagram A) is one of a large number made by me, embodying the principles of the new theory, and is, more especially, the outgrowth and result of the study of—and investigation into—the peculiarities of this "Rook in the corner" idea.

In the diagram before us, there is, it will be observed, an additional feature present. Another black piece—a Springer—has been introduced. In other respects it is a regular "Rook in the corner" proposition.

In the construction of this problem I was governed by the following postulates:

1. White King, Queen, Rook and Bishop cannot force black King and Rook to mate (black Rook being in the corner).

2. White King, Queen, Rook and Bishop cannot force black King and Springer to mate.

3. The white King must be mated on a marginal square.

It follows, therefore, that neither of the black pieces may be captured, as both are absolutely necessary to reach the result sought. I have also concluded that all of Black's moves must be forced, i. e., there must be an unbroken series of

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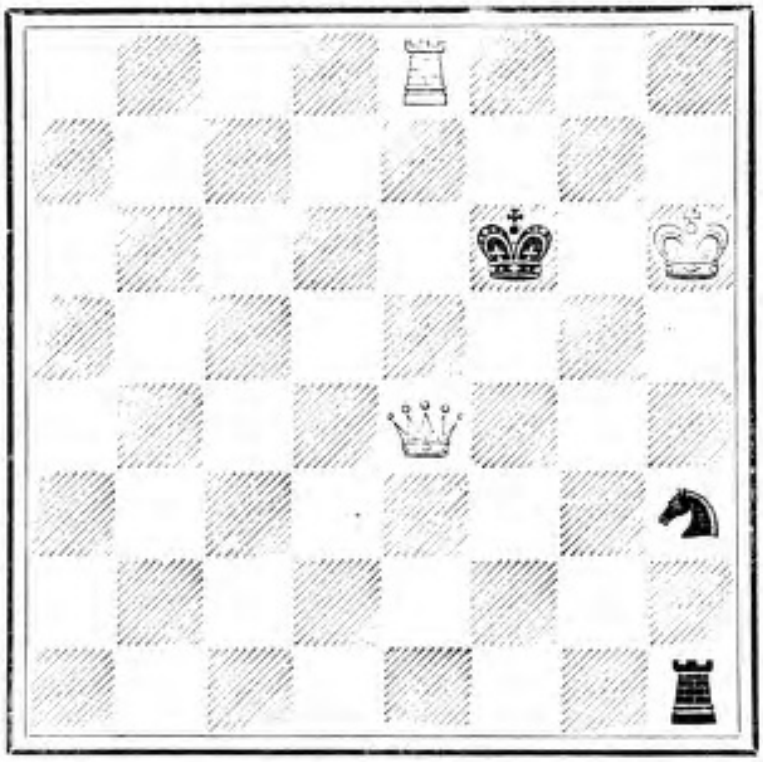
checks, for, should Black at any time be given the opportunity of a choice, one of four things may happen: 1. Perpetual check; 2. Black may pin or capture a white piece, thereby paralyzing White for any further serious efforts; 3. Move the Rook to another corner; and 4. Stand pat with the Rook. To determine which of these may be best for Black will depend, of course, on the position.

My conclusion set forth in postulate 3 was arrived at by a satisfactory line of reasoning involving mate by discovered check, as for instance:

Diagram C.

Black.



White.

It is obvious that the white King could have reached his present position only by a series of discovered checks; the Springer is forced to h3 before the final moves of the white King; lastly, the Rook is, of course, forced to h1 by the sacrifice of the white Bishop, after the Springer and white King are placed.

In the posing of the pieces, my first idea as to the original position of the white King was

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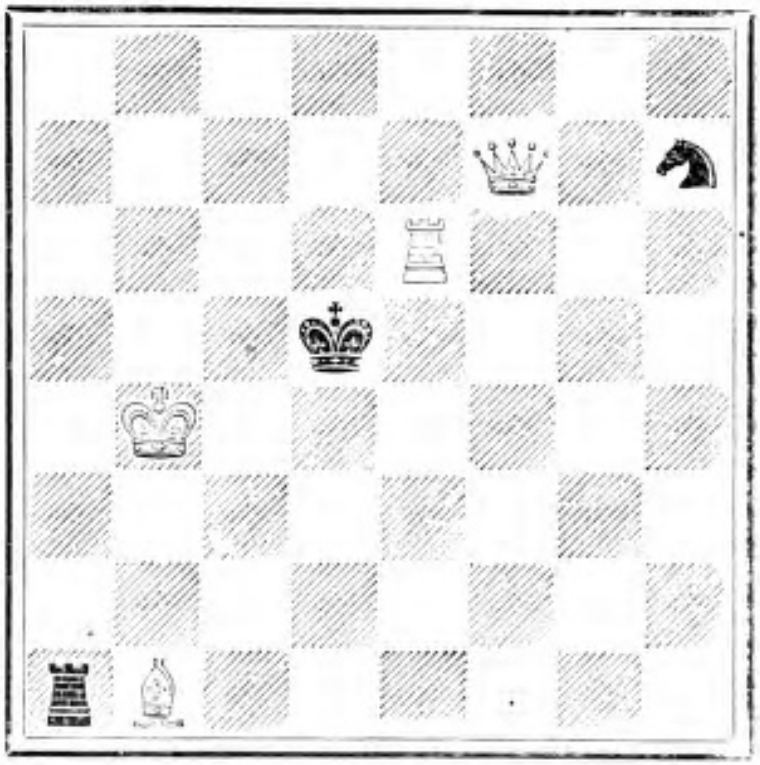
to place him on a white square, remote as possible from his ultimate destination, so that it would be possible to advance him only by discovered checks from the Bishop. The placing of the white King on a black square was a happy thought and was, of course, conceived before I discovered the analyses by which he could be moved to a white square. Obviously now (referring to diagram A), the King, being on a black square, is enabled to make his first move only by discovered check from the Rook.*

Diagram D.

White.



Black.

(The Bishop may stand on c2 or g6.)

I was able to force but one position (see diagram) which enables me to accomplish this. (The Bishop may stand on any of the squares indicated.) To bring about this result, the black

* In the searching for and final discovery of the modus by which it is possible to so move the white King the first time, I was assisted by my nephew, Otto Wurzburg.

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Springer must be first stowed away where he cannot interfere with the operations of the white pieces. After much labor I concluded that g8 or h7 is the spot to which he must be forced. I tried b7 and b8, also h2, but could accomplish nothing with these squares. I finally concluded that h7 was the easiest to reach, because to force him to g8 would require him to occupy either f7 or e6 on his penultimate move, seemingly an impossibility, for, to force the Springer to an inside black square can only be done in certain positions; and to bring him around by way of h2, g4, h6 and g8 (assuming this possible) looks to be a very difficult task, requiring an enormous number of moves. I cannot now remember whether the Springer can be forced to h2, but assuming that he can, it should not be forgotten that he must ultimately occupy h3; and to bring him there from h2 takes time and many moves! My opinion is that his best course is via g5,

I made the problem over ten years ago, and have made postulates, propositions and given conclusions largely from memory. At that time I was familiar with many things that have now escaped me. Some of the details may possibly be cut down; but what of that. I believe the main idea to be sound. I hope it may be, though in the light of recent developments, there seems to be a possibility that my conclusion "that all of black's moves must be forced" may prove incorrect, in which case, however, my idea may be made sound by correcting the stipulation to read: **White, giving check at every move, compels self-mate in 418 moves.**

In the analyzing and testing of chess problems requiring many moves for their solution, it is, more often than otherwise, next to impossible to secure a mathematical result. The bewildering number of variations and combinations incline one to a series of personal judgments, and in the case of a composer sounding the children of his own fancy there are influences, subtle but none the less potent, that create an unconscious

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tendency to indulge in conclusions that coincide with his desires; a personal wish for the success of a given postulate insensibly inclines him to father a cold neutrality toward the success of an unfavorable hypothesis. Being thus psychologically prejudiced by intuitive desires, the accuracy of his conclusions is naturally affected, and the fruit of this condition is therefore, sometimes, the unsound or faulty chess problem.

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ANALYSIS.

(EXPLANATORY—The black-faced type indicate Black's moves. As most of Black's moves are forced, it was deemed unnecessary to give them all. Wherever the initial letter of the moving piece is omitted, it is the same piece as the one last moved; in other words, the piece indicated continues moving until a change is indicated. When Black has a choice of moves, I have given what seemed to me to be the best defense.)

1	Q e8		**a8!**		g8		**S b3**
	f1		c6		**h7**		R d2
	R h1		R f8		Q f7		Q e3
	f2		Q c7		R g6		R f2
	Q f7		c8		Q f5		f4
	g2		**a7**		R h6		**h2**
	d5		R f7		h3		h4
	g3		f6		B d5	90	B c6
	g5	30	Q d7		Q g6		Q d3
	f3		R a6		**f2!**		**e1!**
	R h3		b6		g3		R h1
	e2!		Q a4	60	d3		h2
	h2		**S a5**		**e1!**		**e1**
	d1		R a6		R h1		e2
	Q g4		**b8!**		h2		Q **f3**
	c1		Q e8		**e1**		R g2
	c4		**b7**		e2		g4
10	c2		b5		Q f3		Q e2
	e4		**c7**		R g2		B g2
	f1!		b6		c2	100	b7
	f3		**d7**		Q g3		Q f3
	g1		e6		B g2		f2
	g3		**d8**		e4		R g3
	R h1		R a8	70	Q g2		g2
	Q g2	40	Q c8		d2		**h5**
	e3		**d6!**		e2		Q f7
	R h3		d8		h2		g7
	f4!		**c6!**		B d3		g6
	f3		R a6		Q h4		g5
	e5!		Q b6		g4		f5
	Q g5		R a8		e4	110	R g4
	e4		d8		B e2		c4
	g4		Q c7		b5		**h2**
20	R f5		R f8	80	Q d3		Q f2
	Q g6		Q g3		c3		e3
	R f7		**h6!**		R d2		R c2
	b8!		f4		a2		**S d2**
	Q d6	50	R h8		B a4		Q f2

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g2
h2
g4
B c8
f3
R c3
120 Q h4
R c5
Q d4
R c7
f8
Q g7
d7
e7
f7
f6
R g7
130 g4
Q g6
e8
B f5
Q e6
B g6
d3
Q f5
f4
R g5
140 g8
B e2
S f3
Q g4
h3
S h4
R h8
g7
Q c3
f7
B c4
g6
Q g3
R f8
e4!
f4
150 Q e3
e6
R f7
d8
Q e7
d7
c7
c6
R b7
e7
e8
160 Q a8
b8
B b5
Q b7

b6
B c6
f3
Q e6
R e7
d8
Q d6
170 R c7
d7
Q c6
b6
R c7
Q d6
B h5
S g6
R e7
Q f6
R g7
180 d7
Q f7
e8
S f8
e5
R g7
e7
B f7
c4
Q g7
h5
R e5
190 Q f6
g3
g5
h3
Q f3
f4
R h5
Q g4
R f5
e3
Q e2
d2
B d3
200 Q c3
B b1
Q d3
R e5
e2
f1
Q f3
e3
h1
h3
R e1
Q e3
210 R g1
Q f2
g2

g3
g4
g7
h8
S h7
R h1
g4!
Q d4
g5
g7
220 R f1
Q c3
R e1
Q e3
R e2
Q f3
R g2
g3
h3
Q h1
230 R f3
Q f1
R f2
e2
e4
Q f7
R e6
R b6!
e5
Q f5
f4
240 B e4
f3
Q e4
e2
d1
K c4!
a3
Q d3
a2
Q c2
R b3
B c6
250 Q f5
B b7
Q c5
d6
b6
B e4
Q e6
c7
R b7
b8
Q e5
260 B f5
R c8
Q b5
b8

R c6
Q b6
b5
b4
a4
b3
270 K d5!
R c2
e1
Q e3
d1
R d2
e2
Q d3
c3
R d2
Q e3
R f2
280 f4
h2
h4
B e4
Q d3
e1
R h1
h2
e1
e2
Q f3
R g2
g8
290 Q f2
g2
g3
B f3
Q f4
S g5
Q h2
S h3
R h8
g6
B e4
f7
Q c7
e5
300 e6
R h7
f7
Q g6
f6
R g7
g6
h6
Q h8
R f6
310 Q f8
R d6
Q d8

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	K e6!	R b7	370	c3		c7
	Q e7	R c7		**d4**		b8
	R b6	c8		Q b4		e5
	B b7	Q a8		R c5		**f8**
	d5	R c6		**e6**	Q	h8
	Q b7	Q d8		Q b6		f6
	R d6	R c4		**e7**	R	d6
320	Q d7	Q d3		Q f6	400 Q	d8
	e7	R c2		**d7**	B	f3
	f7	350 d2		f7	Q	e7
	f6	Q c3		d5	R	b6
	g8	b3		**e7**	B	b7
	R d8	R c2		R c7		h1
	d7	Q d3		c8	R	c6
	g7	e4		Q e5	Q	d8
	g5	B e2	380	R c7		b6
	Q f5	h5		Q d6	R	c7
	h8!	Q g2		R e7		**R:B**
	Q f8	R e2		g7	410 Q	a6
330	R h5	360 Q d5		Q d7	R	b7
	Q f5	c4		f5	Q	c6
	R h7	d3		K h6!	R	b8
	K f6!	R c2		Q d5		e8
	K g6!	f2		b7	Q	d7
	Q f7	Q c3		b6		e7
	e7	b3	390	R c7		e4
	B b7	R f1		c6	418	f4
	Q d6	Q b2		**d7**	418	**MATE!**
	B a6	R f3		Q b7		
340	Q c6	**c4**		c8		

NOTES.

Move No.

1 to 33—To force the Springer to a5, for the purpose of liberating the Bishop.

57—From now on the Bishop takes an active part.

79—Getting ready to check at a4, thereby forcing the Springer to b3.

83—The Rook must occupy a2 to permit Bishop to check at a4.

84—The Springer is now forced to his original position, and is the first move of his route to his destination at h7, where he will be out of the way and cannot interfere with our intentions.

85 to 114—Illustrating how the black Springer may, in certain positions, be forced to an

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inside black square (d2).

100—Necessary to be in position for the 118th and 123rd moves.

136—Getting ready to check at e2, thereby advancing the Springer.

141—Forcing the Springer to f3.

143—Forcing the Springer to h4.

144 to 166—Preparatory to forcing the Springer to g6 by checking at h5 with B.

176—Forcing the Springer to g6.

182—Forcing the Springer to f8.

202—Necessary to create the position by which white King can move with a discovered check.

217—Forcing the Springer to h7.

245—Moving the white King to a white square. And now, by reason of the Bishop being on a white square, the white King is enabled by discovered checks from the Bishop to advance to h6.

262—By this maneuver white is enabled to advance his King by a discovered check from the Rook, which is not possible again.

271—White must now force the Springer to h3 before attempting any further progress with his King.

295—Forcing the Springer to g5.

296—Forcing the Springer to h3.

318—Preparatory to moving King and checking by discovery.

358—Preparatory to making the final move of the white King by discovered check.

387—Final move of the white King.
And now white must force the black Rook to h1 by a sacrifice of the Bishop; after which the finishing coup.

I take this occasion to make an important announcement: In the recently published volume of chess problems, "Bauernumwandlung-Schachaufgaben" (compiled by A. C. White and Max Weiss), problem IV, on page 104, is incorrectly

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printed, and therefore impossible of solution. The black Pawn at g3 (Black's K S 6) should stand on g4 (K S 5) as follows:

Diagram E.

White.

Black.

White to play and compel self-mate in how many moves?

I consider this one of my best and most difficult Pawn-promotion problems, and will add ten dollars to the prize already offered by Mr. White for the first correct solution.

W. A. SHINKMAN,

Grand Rapids, Mich., December, 1907.

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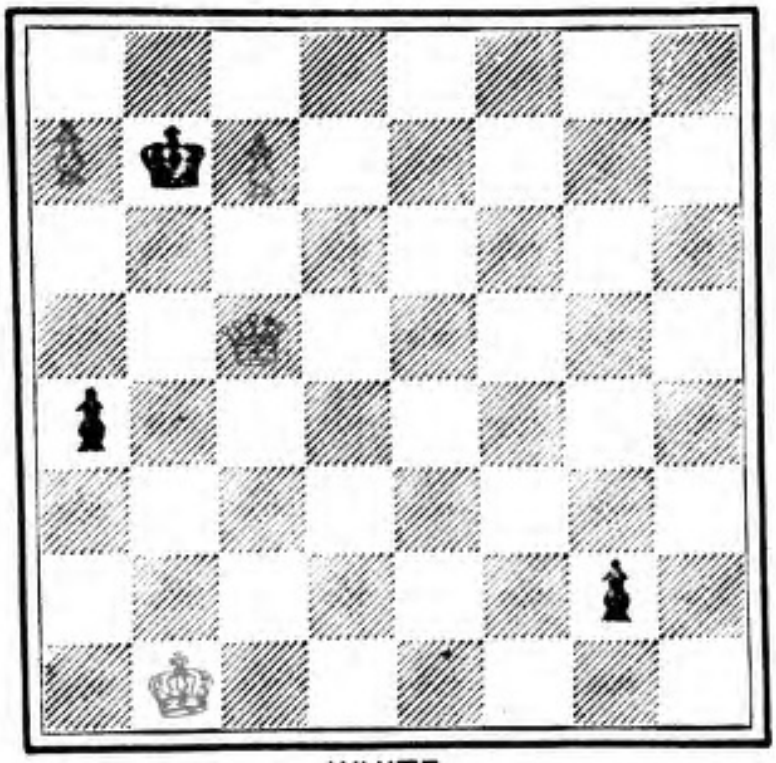
Correction

W. A. SHINKMAN,

Grand Rapids Mich.

BLACK



WHITE

White _____ Mates in _____ Moves

Selbst mat in wie viel zügen?

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PAT. JAN. 21, 1908

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