

**Bird, Henry Edward**

**• Morphy, Paul**

(head-to-head) Match (5)

[A.J. Goldsby I]

.  
(I first began working on this version of this game in <around> 2001 - although I quickly dropped it, and did not pick it up again until almost three years later. The bulk of the annotations here were written in 2004 ... .. )

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One of the more famous games that Paul Morphy ever played, it is also another superlative example of his incredible chess prowess.

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I had received countless requests to annotate this game, but prior to now, I never had a really good reason to do so. (Several authors had previously done ...

"The DEFINITIVE Analysis" of this historic chess encounter ... so I saw no real reason to try my hand at it. Actually - I began to {half-heartedly} analyze this game about a dozen different times - but

**C41** | I always got sidetracked by various other projects.)

**2462**

**2650**

1858

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A little over a year ago, (the summer of 2004); someone sent me a truly historic e-mail. It contained a link to a Russian site which analyzed several old games of chess, this was the second game that it looked at. (The first was a game of the McDonnell-La Bourdonnais match.)

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Although my ability to read Russian is limited to one or two words, it was obvious from the exclams and double-exclams what the authors thought of this game. This began over a year of research and analysis into this epic chess struggle, which culminated in the work that you are reading now.

{I left this paragraph intact, although I initially wrote it in 2005, in 2011 ... it looks a little bit odd. However, I had anticipated finishing this game in a short amount of time, although events in my life simply did not allow this to happen.}

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This game is also wonderfully

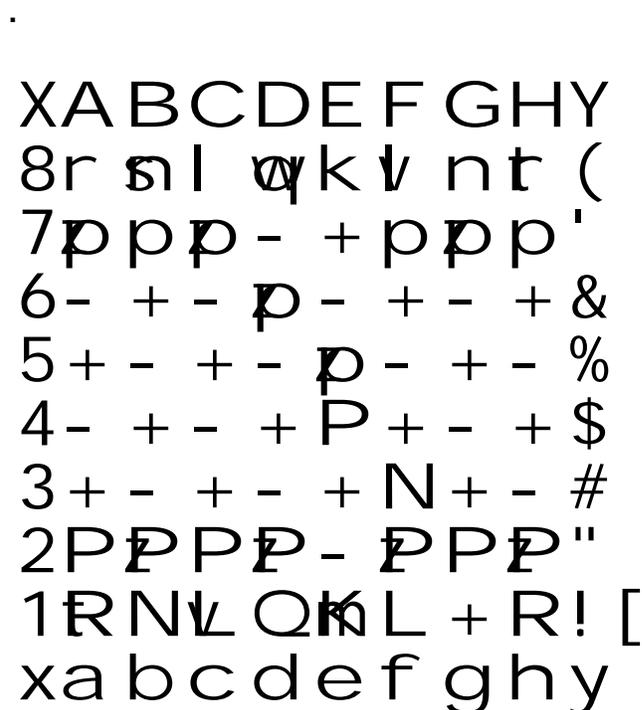
analyzed by GM Larry Christiansen. [(On the ChessMaster 10th Edition program.)  
Main menu ---> Learn ---> Academy ---> Larry Christiansen's Attacking Chess.]

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This was a game played between Paul Morphy, and the English player, H. Bird. (The match was probably played for stakes, although these had to be negotiated through a 3rd party, as Morphy's family had set him the condition of not gambling prior to his departure from America.)

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The ratings here are just estimates!!!  
Mr. Sonas does not give a rating for Paul Morphy in January, 1858; and only gives Henry Bird as 2462. But the records are terribly sketchy for this period of chess history, but it was clear from several sources that Bird was considered to be one of the leading masters of his whole era.

1.e4 e5 ; 2.Nf3 d6 ;  
The Philidor Defense.



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How Morphy arrived at this particular opening, I will will never know. (Some tendency that Morphy had observed in Bird's earlier games? Or was it that he simply wanted to try a line that was currently in the vogue ... at that time in chess history?)

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I can only find about 8 examples of Morphy playing this opening in the games database, so we know that this was NOT his favorite opening! (As Black - against the KP opening.)

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The only GM - that I know of -  
(in modern times ...) that liked to  
play this opening on any kind of  
regular basis was GM B. Larsen.  
[He even wrote a pamphlet for  
Chess Digest (Ken Smith, Dallas/  
TX) entitled: "Why not The  
Philidor Defense?"]

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**3.d4 f5!?** ; (Daring? / Unsound?)  
An extremely risky counter-attack  
(gambit) that was "all the rage" in  
the mid-1800's. Apparently, even  
Morphy was not immune to the  
'fashions' of trendy chess openings.  
{See also Barnes-Morphy, 1858.  
If you have the ChessBase dB of  
games, this contest is examined  
by GM Pavel Blatny.}

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Of course, in those days, opening  
knowledge rarely went past move  
five, and generally did not extend  
past move ten, so it would have  
been very difficult - at that the time  
that this game was actually played -  
to accurately judge the overall  
soundness of this move.

[A better (sounder) way to play  
would have been:

<sup>1</sup> 3...Nf6 ; 4.Nc3 Nbd7 ;  
5.Bc4 Be7 ; 6.0-0 0-0 ;  
7.Re1 c6 ; 8.a4<sup>2</sup> , (space)  
White has a very solid edge,

Black's results from this  
position - at the highest levels -  
have not been very encouraging.

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See the GM contest:  
A. Shirov - Z. Azmaiprashvili;  
The (FIDE) Men's Olympiad (tt)  
Calvia / Mallorca, ESP; 2004.  
{White won a very instructive game,  
1-0, in just 43 overall moves.}

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[ See (also) MCO-14, beginning  
on page 128 / columns # 01 - # 06 /

for more info on these lines. ]

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[ See also MCO-15, the coverage  
of  
the Philidor's Defense begins  
with  
page # 132. (Col.'s # 01 - 06; and  
all the notes that apply.) ] ]

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GM Bent Larsen advised Black  
to capture on d4 here:  
(>/=) 3...exd4! ? ; {Diagram?}  
This surrenders the center, but  
avoids many of the severely  
cramped positions that are often  
so typical of the Philidor Defense.  
4.Nxd4 Nf6 ; 5.Nc3 Be7 ;  
6.Be2 0-0 ; 7.0-0 Re8 ;  
8.f4! ?<sup>2</sup> , {Diagram?}  
with a small (space) advantage

for White.

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GM R. Felgaer - GM L. V. Nisipeanu;  
Calvia (FIDE) Men's Olympiad  
Mallorca, ESP; 2004. (1-0, 73 m.  
) ]

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XABCDEFGHIY
8r n l w k v n t (
7p p p - + - p p '
6- + - p - + - + &
5+ - + - p p + - %
4- + - P P + - + $
3+ - + - + N + - #
2P P P + - P P P "
1R N V Q K L + R! [
x a b c d e f g h y

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Today, with millions of games played,

{Refers mainly to the biggest DB's.};  
we know that 3...f5; is highly dubious,

I doubt there is a single example of a

GM using this move in modern chess

praxis. ('?!' - GM Garry Kasparov.)

[None-the-less, find the game  
Charbonneau-Nakamura (2010) in  
the CB database ... Black loses badly.

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**4.Nc3** , (Too routine?)  
White brings out both of his  
cavalry units, a move which  
follows opening principles.

[Possibly two superior alternatives  
here for White were:  
(>/=) 4.dxe5 fxe4 ; 5.Ng5 d5 ;  
6.e6<sup>2</sup> , - GM Larry Christiansen. ]

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Or even:  
(>/=) 4.Bc4 exd4!? ; 5.Ng5 Nh6  
;  
6.0-0<sup>2</sup> , (Probably even - '±')  
with good chances for White.  
(- GM Larry Christiansen) ]

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Another good line would be: (>/=)  
RR4.exf5! e4 ; 5.Ng5 Bxf5 ;  
6.Nc3 d5 ; 7.f3± , (w/advan.)  
- GM Bent Larsen.

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White has a very large edge,  
some engines already evaluate  
this position as winning for  
the first party, here.

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[ See MCO-15, page # col. # 01;  
and especially note # (a.) here.]

( 7.f3 Be7 ; 8.fxe4 dxe4 ;  
9.Ngxe4 Nf6 ; 10.Nxf6+ Bxf6 ;  
11.Qe2+! Kf7 ; 12.Qf3!± )]

XABCDEFGHIY  
8r n l w k v n t ( {  
7p p p - + - p p '  
6- + - p - + - + &  
5+ - + - p p + - %  
4- + - P P + - + \$  
3+ - N - + N + - #  
2P P P + - P P P "  
1R - v Q K L + R!  
x a b c d e f g h y

The move does develop a piece,  
but for whatever reason, modern  
masters consider this try to be  
somewhat innocuous here.

4...fxe4 ; "!?" (hmmm)  
Black captures on e4 - this  
opens the game, temporarily  
gains a Pawn, and perhaps hopes  
to win a tempo (or two) because  
of the attack on the White Knight.

[Some masters have said  
that Black should play instead  
the capture on d4, however  
White gets a solid edge  
against that try as well.

For example: (>/=)  
4...exd4!? ; 5.Qxd4!? Nc6 ;  
6.Bb5<sup>2</sup> , (Maybe - '±')  
when White is clearly better.  
- GM Larry Christiansen ]

XABCDEFGHIY  
8r n l w k v n t ( {  
7p p p - + - p p '  
6- + - p - + - + &  
5+ - + - p - + - %  
4- + - P p + - + \$  
3+ - N - + N + - #  
2P P P + - P P P "  
1R - v Q K L + R! [  
x a b c d e f g h y

Some masters {notably Steinitz} have  
condemned this move as too risky.  
[?]  
(Black opens even more lines.)  
However, the move looks perfectly  
natural to me, and is also the first  
choice of several strong computer

programs as well. Further, after the third move, Black cannot really avoid getting a disadvantage ... no matter what line he plays here.

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(A possible improvement - over the course of the actual game - might have been 5...Nf6; this is the line that most of the engines prefer.)

**5.Nxe4 d5 ; 6.Ng3** , (Passive?)  
A calm move ... backing away from the complications. (In Bird's defense,

he thought for quite some time before playing this move. The complications

are truly mind-boggling, maybe he never saw a line he truly considered to be completely winning for him, 6.Neg5 might have been better than game, as well.)

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[Once again, I refer you to the former U.S. Champion's analysis:  
6.Nxe5! dxe4 []; 7.Qh5+ g6™ ;  
8.Nxg6! hxg6! ; {Diagram?}  
Calling White's bluff.  
(Worth a look was: < 8...Nf6!?? ;  
9.Qe5+ Kf7 ; 10.Nxh8+ Kg7 ;  
11.Bg5 Be7 ; 12.0-0-0 Kxh8© ;  
and while Black has some play and

some "comp" here, White looks to be

solidly better in this position.

[ ('±') | + 2§ for two ♠'s.) ] ).

9.Qxg6+! Kd7 ; 10.Qf5+ Ke8 ;

11.Qe5+ Be6! ; 12.Qxh8

Qd5!?, „ ;

when the respected GM thinks that Black might be OK. ("comp")

- GM Larry Christiansen

See the program/disk;

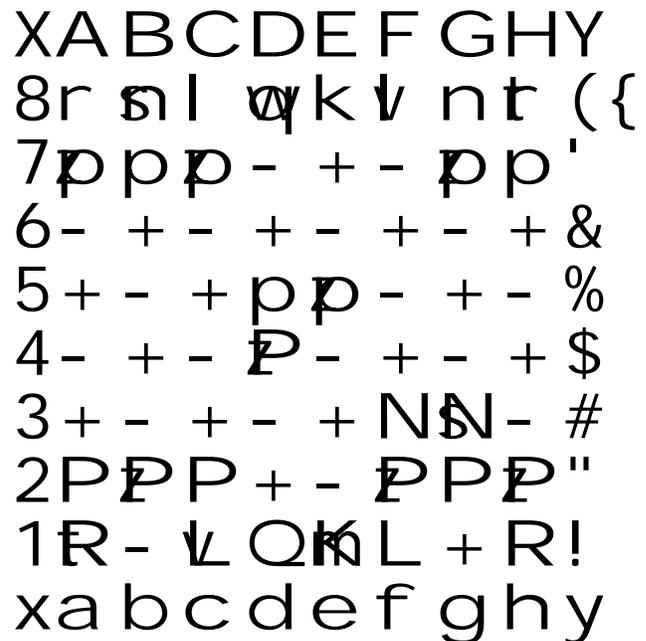
"ChessMaster, 10th Edition.")

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( Or 12...Nc6 ; 13.Be3 Nf6 ;

14.0-0-0 Kf7 ; 15.Be2 Bg7 ;

16.Qh4± , - Fritz 12. )]



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This move has been virulently, universally and totally condemned by dozens of modern masters, (I.e.,

Ng3?);  
 who state (quite confidently) that  
 White  
 should 'sac' a piece here ...  
 but the pundits have NEVER proven  
 a  
 win (for the first player) beyond any  
 shadow of all doubt.

I think that the two severest critics of  
 this move were Staunton and Steinitz.  
 (Neither were capable of really being  
 totally objective when it came to Mr.  
 Paul Morphy ... or his chess games.)

**6...e4 ; 7.Ne5 Nf6** ; {equal?}  
 Now Black seems to have no real  
 problems in this position. (White  
 may have a small edge here, but  
 it isn't anything to get really  
 excited about.)

**8.Bg5!?** , (Double - hmmm)  
 Some consider this to be dubious,  
 one GM called it, "a perfectly normal  
 developing move in this position."

[A big improvement over the  
 course of the game was: >/=  
 1 8.f3! exf3 ; 9.Qxf3<sup>2</sup> ,

the analysis engine - Fritz 12.  
 (The machine considers that  
 White is solidly better in this  
 particular position.) ]

[.  
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Or RR8.Be2 Bd6 ; 9.c4<sup>2</sup> ,  
 when White might have a  
 very small edge. ]



While this pin is not a gross violation  
 of opening principles, I do agree with  
 those analysts who feel that White  
 should have immediately taken  
 steps to try and break down Black's  
 imposing central Pawn phalanx.

8...Bd6 ; 9.Nh5?! , (Maybe - '?')  
This looks to be a normal exploitation

of a pin, but today we know that it is a

a bad idea to move the same piece  
more than once in the opening ...  
unless you can prove an advantage,  
beyond any shadow of a doubt.

[One former student of mine  
suggested the (following) try of  
P-QR3, which is not all that bad.  
9.a3!? 0-0 ; 10.c4! Nc6!?! ;  
11.Nxc6 bxc6 ; 12.c5 Be7 ;  
13.Be2÷ , (Possibly equal?)  
with a fair position for both sides. ]



Probably f3 or c4<sup>2</sup> were better than  
this particular move. (Or even Be2

with the idea of castling next.)

(In the following line, 10.BxN/f6;  
may have been an improvement  
over the course of the actual game.)

9...0-0 ; 10.Qd2!? Qe8! ;  
Bird probably overlooked this sly  
move by the great Paul Morphy.



This is a good position to stop and  
take a look around. And after only  
ten moves, White's situation is  
already close to being critical.

11.g4? , (Gag! Ugh! Barf!)  
A truly horrible move, inflicting a  
gash in White's King-side and it  
is also a play which immediately

confers a very large advantage to the second player.

[A player who once was rated as #1 in the world, (GM Geza Maroczy); gave the following continuation: 11.Nxf6+!? gxf6 ; 12.Bxf6 Rxf6?!

; An inferior move ... missing a fairly obvious tactic. ( Much better was: 1 12...e3! ; with a solid edge for Black. ). 13.Qg5+ Rg6 ; 14.Nxg6 hxg6 ; 15.Qxd5+ , "÷" (Too crazy!) when the play becomes (a little) vague. ]

[. \*\*\*\*\*

Perhaps White's best chance was the following line: 1 11.Bxf6! Qxh5 ; 12.Be2 Qf5 ; ( RR12...Qe8!?<sup>3</sup> ; - Houdini 1.5 ). 13.Bh4 Bxe5 ; 14.dxe5 Be6 ; 15.0-0 Qxe5<sup>3</sup> ; - Fritz 12. ]

[. \*\*\*\*\*

White gets into serious trouble with the greedy line of: < 11.Nxg7? Kxg7 ; 12.Bh6+ Kh8 ; 13.Bb5!? Nbd7! ; 14.Bxf8 Qxf8 ; 15.Bxd7 Bxd7 ; 16.Nxd7 Nxd7 ; 17.0-0 Qf5! ; (Black's better.)

. when Fritz 12 considers Black's game to be practically winning here. [And here - I would have to concur with this assessment - White's Rooks will not see action for several moves, while (in one more move) all of Black's pieces can be poised for a killing blow.] ]



. This move is motivated by a very cheap tactic, which Morphy manages

to side-step without any difficulty. (After years of studying Bird's style, I can say {now} that Bird would often find strange and even bizarre tactical shots ... and eventually make them work. Here, the anti-positional g2-g4 would only work

if White had a lot more development than he does here. White does gain an open g-file to the Black King, which could have proven dangerous to Morphy, if the situation was just a little different than it was here. - A.J.G; 2013.)

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**11...Nxg4** ; (Maybe - '!')  
Morphy side-steps his opponent's carefully laid plans here ...

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[Bird's concept is validated by the following continuation:  
< 11...Bxg4? ; 12.Nxf6+ gxf6 ; 13.Nxg4± , {Diagram?}  
when White is clearly on top. ]

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The machine prefers:  
RR11...Bxe5 ; (Maybe - '!')  
when things get really weird.

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For now, I simply follow the moves of the engine here, as they proceed to go off the "deep end" as far as the resulting complications go ...  
12.dxe5 , (Maybe - '!')

This looks the best to me, although it is far from clear, and it certainly is not White's

only option at this point.

( White could also play:  
12.Nxg7!? Kxg7 ; 13.dxe5  
Nxg4-+ ;

(Analysis line - Fritz 12.)

when White is down a piece, and seems to lack the modern factors that would indicate that the first player would have good play for the material that he invested in this line. )

12...Nxg4 ; 13.Qxd5+ Be6 ;  
14.Nxg7 Kxg7 ; 15.Bf6+!?,  
Sacking a Pawn to open more lines to the Black King.

( RR15.Qxe4 Qg6 ;  
"-+" - Houdini ).

15...Nxf6 ; 16.exf6+ Rxf6 ;  
17.Rg1+ Rg6 ; 18.Qe5+ Kf7 ;  
19.Rxg6 hxg6 ; 20.Qxc7+ Qe7 ;  
21.Qxe7+ Kxe7 22.Bg2 Nd7 ;  
23.Bxe4 Nc5! ;

A nice trap, if White takes the tidbit on g6, than simply ...Rg8; will win for Black.

And - of course! - a piece down, White cannot possibly trade any more material.

24.Bh1!? a5! ; "-/+" - Fritz 13.

(- A.J. Goldsby; 2013.)

when the box has Black winning here by more than 3 points ... .. ]

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Morphy did not fall for traps, at

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XABCDEFGHI GHY
8r ㄥl + q t k + (
7p p p - + - p p '
6- + - v - + - + &
5+ - + p ㄥ- v N%
4- + - P p + n + $
3+ - + - + - + - #
2P P P ㄥ- P - P "
1R- + - ㄥL + R! [
x a b c d e f g h y
    
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XABCDEFGHI GHY
8r ㄥl + - t k + (
7p p p - + - p p '
6- + - v - + - + &
5+ - + p + - v q %
4- + - P p + N + $
3+ - + - + - + - #
2P P P ㄥ- P - P "
1R- + - ㄥL + R! [
x a b c d e f g h y
    
```

least not the large majority of the time.

the center, his freer development and better pawn structure ... looks to have already outplayed his opponent in this situation.

**12.Nxg4 Qxh5** ; {Lady - out!}  
 Morphy plays the "obvious" move, although "Bishop-takes-g4" was worth serious consideration here.

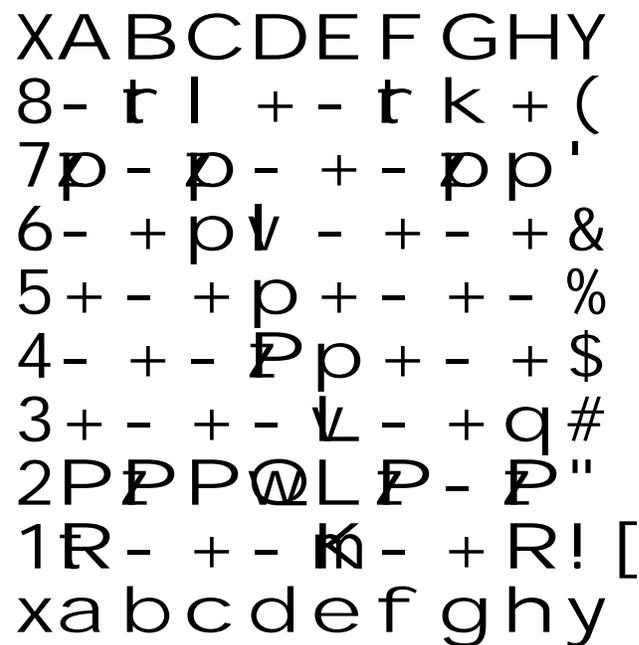
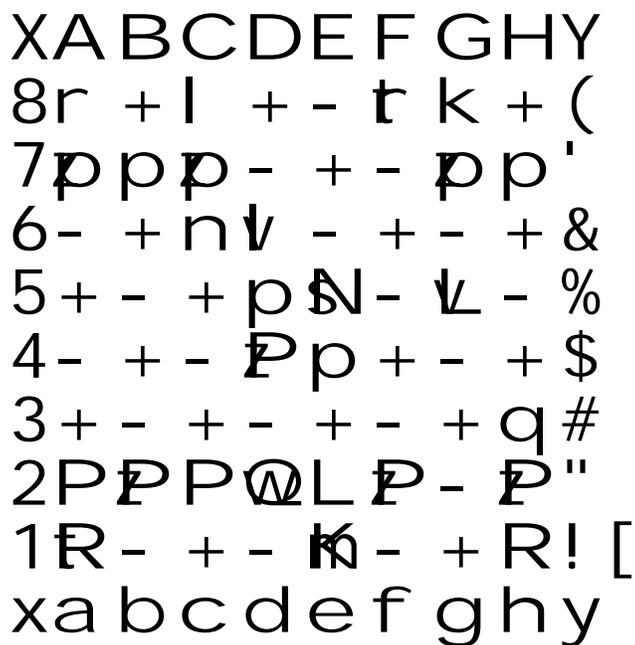
In addition to what was played in the actual game, RR 13...c5; was also worth serious consideration for Black.

(Fritz 13 & Deep Shredder.)  
**13.Ne5™ Nc6!** ; **14.Be2 Qh3** ;  
 Morphy places his most powerful unit on the very edge of the chess wilderness ...

[The other option here was:  
 12...Bxg4 ; 13.Nxg7 Kxg7!?! ;  
 ( RR13...Qg6 ; 14.Rg1 Bf3+ ).  
 14.Rg1© , (With "comp." here.)  
 with some play down the file.  
 {This note dates back to 2001, in 2011, the box sees a clear edge for Black.} ]

[Interesting was: 14...Qe8!? ; {D?} with a good position for Black. ]

Black, with his pawn wedge in



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A hallmark of Morphy's play was that he rarely retreated.

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The next few moves require very little explanation ... Morphy continues

to try and menace Bird at every turn.

**15.Nxc6 bxc6 ; 16.Be3 Rb8 ;**

A good - and obvious - move, placing a Black Rook on the half-open b-file here.

(Diagram)

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The idea of 16...a7-a5;  
(to be followed by pushing

the pawn to a4) is liked by several strong chess engines here. (Fritz 13, Houdini, etc.)

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**17.0-0-0!?** , (Hmmm.)

White "castles into it," but (by now), I am not sure that he really had a clearly superior alternative.

(Most engines seem to indicate that White should castle Q-side.)

[ RR17.c3!? a5 ; 18.0-0-0 a4-+ ]

(Diagram)

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Please study this position carefully.

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XABCDEFGHIY
8- t l + - t k + ( {
7p - p - + - p p '
6- + p v - + - + &
5+ - + p + - + - %
4- + - P p + - + $
3+ - + - v - + q #
2P P P Q L P - P "
1+ - K R + - + R!
x a b c d e f g h y

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Morphy's next move may be one of the most brilliant sacrifices ever made. Even in 2013, the engines do not seem to appreciate the depth or strength of Black's attack. Even the highest-rated programs do not play Morphy's move, no matter how much time you give them! It's also one of the deepest sacks ever made, the resultant positions seem to defy even engine-assisted analysis!!

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**17...Rxf2!!** ; [Really - '!!!']  
 Perhaps one of the most brilliant moves ever played ... even with database and computers, modern masters can not agree on the "correctness" of this move.

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[GM Garry Kasparov (and GM Larry Christiansen) opined that the following move was better: RR17...Bg4!µ ; (Maybe "-/+") when Black has the better game ...

and has an extra Pawn as well. (Many chess engines - like Fritz 13 - also prefer this, as well.) ]

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XABCDEFGHIY
8- t l + - + k + (
7p - p - + - p p '
6- + p v - + - + &
5+ - + p + - + - %
4- + - P p + - + $
3+ - + - v - + q #
2P P P Q L t - P "
1+ - K R + - + R! [
x a b c d e f g h y

```

.  
 This one move has probably received

every annotation symbol under the sun,  
 the latest {Russian} analysis may show  
 that this move wins - BY FORCE - for Black!!!!!!!!!!  
 ('?!' - GM Garry Kasparov.)

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In my opinion, this is a true sacrifice, the complications that arise from this move truly are mind-boggling. It seems that we have only just begun to explore them once computer engines became strong enough not to be considered not just as toys, but as serious tools enabling deep analysis into the resultant positions. Credit is due also to GM Karsten Mueller; who undertook a whole series of articles that tried to investigate the correctness of this particular sacrifice.

**18.Bxf2 Qa3!!** ; (Ultra-glide!)  
 The stunning follow-up, now Black does threaten mates and mayhem ... yet it appears that Bird has a fairly simple answer.

[Less effective (</=) was:  
 RR18...Ba3! ? ; 19.Qe3! ÷ ,  
 when Black may not have any  
 advantage at all. ]

**19.c3™** ; (This looks to be forced.)

This is virtually White's only good move here ... several masters give this an exclamation (!) ... but that looks like a bit of overkill to me.  
 (But --> '!' - GM Karsten Mueller)

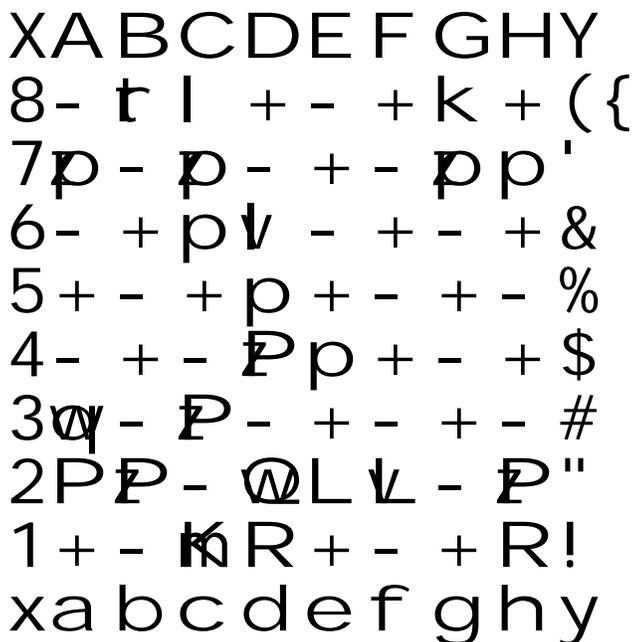
[Bad for White would be:  
 < 19.Bb5?! Qxa2! ; Best.  
 ( < 19...Rxb5! ? ; 20.c4 Qf3 ;  
 21.Bg3 e3! ; 22.Qc3 Bb4 ;  
 23.Rhf1™ , {Forced.}  
 If 23.Qc2?, then 23...Bd2+; and  
 if 24.Kb1, then 23...Bf5; will win  
 White's Queen.  
 23... Qxf1! ; 24.Rxf1 Bxc3 ;  
 25.cxb5 Bd2+ ; 26.Kc2 cxb5 ;  
 Black has a Bishop and THREE  
 Pawns for a lone White Rook. ).  
 20.c4 dxc4 ; 21.b4 Qb3 ;  
 22.Qb2 Rxb5 ; 23.Qxb3 cxb3 ;  
 24.Kb2 Rxb4 ; "-/+ " {Diag?}  
 with a Bishop and a fistful of  
 Pawns  
 for the one White Rook. ]

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Even worse for White would be the  
 following line: < 19.Qc3? Qxa2! ;  
 Black threatens ...¥b4; followed  
 by  
 ...£a1#, (if White moves the  
 Queen).  
 ( Not as effective would be:  
 < 19...Bf4+! ? ; 20.Rd2! Qxa2! ;

as White can now play Qa3. ).  
 20.Rhg1!? Rxb2! ; 21.Rg3  
 , {Box?}  
 This could be forced.  
 ( But not: <21.Qxb2? Bf4+!  
 22.Rd2 Bxd2+ ; 23.Kxd2 Qxb2  
 ;  
 with an easy win for Black. ("-/+")  
 ).  
 21...Rb1+ ; 22.Kd2 Bb4  
 ; "-/+"  
 and White is losing the Queen. ]  
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It would be a gross blunder to  
 fall for: </= <19.bxa3?? Bxa3# . ]



Another important nexus has been reached, so I offer another diagram of this position here.

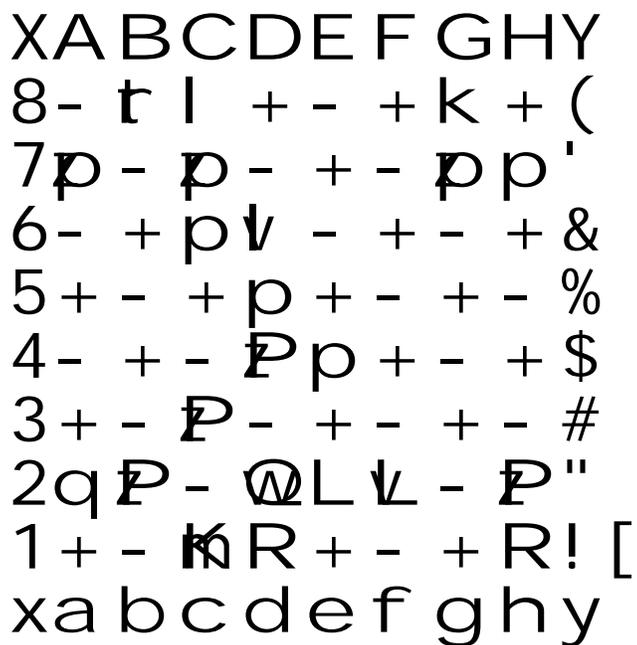
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 .  
**19...Qxa2** ; (Box?) {Diagram?}  
 This move is virtually forced for Black, but now Morphy has the cute threat of:  
 20...Ba3!; 21.Bxa3?, Rb1 mate.

[The tempting "Bishop-to-f5" fails in a surprising way, i.e., <19...Bf5?! ; 20.Kb1!! e3+? ; ( 1 20...Bf4™ ; 21.Qc2 e3 ; 22.Bd3 Bxd3 ; 23.Rxd3 exf2 ; 24.Qxf2 Qd6 ; 25.Rf3± , Maybe en "+/-" ).  
 21.Ka1 exd2 ; 22.bxa3+- , and White is winning. ]  
 [.  
 \*\*\*\*\*

Yakov Neishtadt points out: RR <19...e3!? ; 20.Bxe3! Bf5!? ; 21.Qc2!! Bxc2? ; 22.bxa3 Bxd1 ; 23.Bxd1 Bxa3+ ; 24.Kd2 , "+/-" and White is winning here. ]

(Diagram)

.  
 Right now, Morphy is basically down a Rook, with only a few infantry units to show for the Abram's M-1 Tank that has been destroyed on this deadly battlefield.



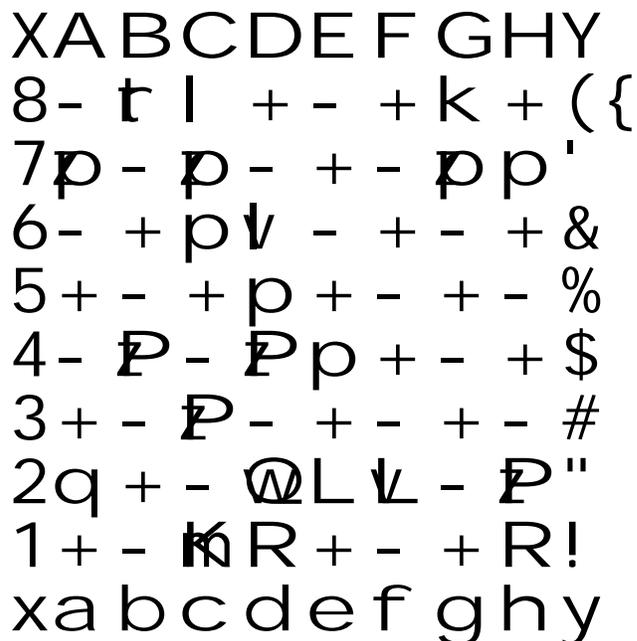
**20.b4™** , (Definitely best.)  
 While this looks like an error, it is forced for White and is pretty much the only playable move that White has in this position. (Just about any other try - here - for White, will lose horribly.)

[Obviously bad was: </= <20.Bb5? e3! ; 21.Qc2™ , (forced) ( <21.Bxe3?! Qa1+ ; 22.Kc2 Bf5+ ; 23.Bd3 Qxb2# ). 21...Rxb5-+ ; Black wins easily. ]

[. \*\*\*\*\* \*\*\*\*\* \*\*\*\*\* \*\*\*\*\* \*\*\*\*\*

One student, rated over 1600, suggested that White ignore

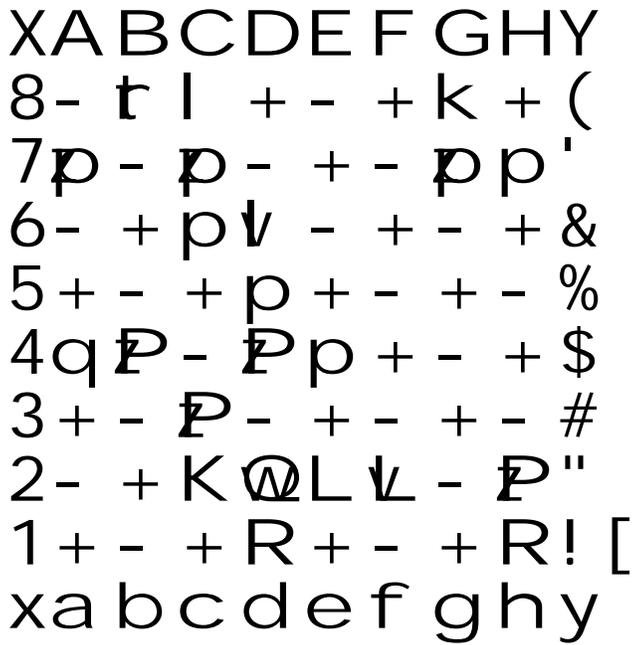
Black and play Rhg1 here ... </= <20.Rhg1?? Qa1+ ; 21.Kc2 Qxb2# . (Mate.) ]



White seems to be surviving ... if only by the smallest of any possible margin here ...

**20...Qa1+!** ; **21.Kc2 Qa4+!** ; Black has continued his assault against the General of the White Army with all force that he could possibly muster.

(Diagram)



But now Bird has to make a critical decision of where to place his King.

**22.Kb2?** , (Nearly a blunder.)  
 Maybe the worst King-move that White had in this position, poor Mr. Bird {later} admitted that he missed Morphy's shocking 25th move.

[Endgame Corner No.23  
 from www.chesscafe.com  
 (November 2002)  
 < The Riddle of Bird vs Morphy,  
 Revisited > by Karsten Müller.  
 [See also the Morphy disc as well.]

GM Karten Mueller gives the following continuation:

1 22.Kc1™

**A)** The following line was initially

done with Fritz 12, but then {later} checked with many other engines.  
 <22...Bxb4? ; 23.cxb4 Qa1+ ; This is the most convincing line, and the easiest to follow.  
 .  
 ( Or 23...Rxb4 ; 24.Qg5 h6! ; 25.Qd8+ Kh7 ; 26.Qxc8 Qa2 ; 27.Qf5+ , "=" (Draw/perpetual. )  
 when the Black King will not be able to escape all of the many checks. ).

.  
 24.Kc2 Qa4+ ; 25.Kc1 Qa1+ ; 26.Kc2 Qa4+ ; 27.Kc1= .  
 Both sides must accept the draw by the eventual 3-time repetition of the position. ;  
**B)** . Black can also try:  
 22...Bf5! ?÷ ; (Unclear?)  
 <Maybe "=/+">  
 with an interesting game for Black. (Oct, 2015.) ;  
**C)** 22...a5!! ;  
 This is a MAJOR improvement for Black! (Prior to chess engines, 22...BxP/b4; was thought to win for Black. Later, pundits claimed to have found a win for White ... see M. Shibut's book ... but this is also incorrect!)  
 {See the analysis below.}

\*\* \*\* \* \* \* \* \*

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\*\* \*\* \*\* \*\* \*\* \*\* \*\*

Returning to the analysis of  
the Russian and the Karsten  
Mueller variants.

23.Qc2!? Qa3+! ;

**C1)** A {former} World  
Champion

(instead) gives the line:

<24.Kd2? axb4 ;

Now - according to the chess  
engines - Black is winning in  
all lines from here.

25.Ra1?? , Simply terrible!

( 1 25.Ke1™ bxc3 ; 26.Be3  
Rb2-+ ;

---> the strong engine - Fritz 12.

).

25...bxc3+ ; 26.Ke3?! Bf4+!!

;

27.Kxf4 Qd6+ ; 28.Ke3 Qh6#

.

- GM Anatoly Karpov.

(But this whole line is severely

flawed - check it with any good

program, and you will see what

I mean here!);

**C2)** 24.Qb2™ , {Diagram?}

This is completely forced here.

.

.

.

axb4 ; 25.Qxa3 , (Forced!?)

Most engines gives this as best.

.

( <25.Kb1!? Qa4! ; 26.c4!?  
Ra8!³ ).

.

25...bxa3 ; (A very wild  
position.)

Right now, Black has FOUR  
Pawns ...

for the Rook that he has  
invested.

.

Now - many engines choose  
several moves - and Fritz 12  
likes ♣g3 here. (Remember -  
I am not generating this whole

line - I am just investigating  
someone else's analysis line.)

26.Be3!? Rb3!! ; 27.Kd2 ;

This is pretty much forced.

.

( Even worse would be:

<27.Kc2?? Rb2+ ; 28.Kc1  
Rxe2 ;

when Black wins easily. ("-/+")

;

.

The box prefers the  
following line here:

27.Bg5!? Rxc3+ ; 28.Kb1

Be6 ;

29.Rhg1 Bxh2 ; 30.Rg2 Bd6

;

31.Rc1 Rxc1+ ; 32.Bxc1

*Kf7*<sup>3</sup> ;

A VERY wild and unusual position, Black has SIX Pawns for the Rook! ).

.  
27...Rb2+ ; 28.Ke1 a2<sup>©</sup>  
; {D?}

This looks good, and RR 28... Bh3;  
was worth serious investigation

as well. [Black has FOUR Pawns for the Rook that was sacked. Additionally, (right now) the first

player has poor play - and his

pieces do not work well together, not at all.] .

.  
29.Ra1 , ([?]) This could be forced.

( Also worth a look was:

29.*Kf2!*?<sub>μ</sub> ).

29...Bd7! ; 30.Kd1 c5!! ;

31.dxc5 Be7!! ; 32.h4!?

**C2a)** In 2006, when I first went over

Mueller's analysis, I liked the move of 32...*¥f6!* here. The idea is simple: play ...BxP/c3; and then ...d5-d4; when Black

looks to have a crushing edge

...

and probably a winning

advantage.

<sup>1</sup> 32...Bf6! ; 33.Bd4<sup>™</sup> Bxh4!

;

Now Black threatens ...*¥a4+*;

so it looks like White's next move is forced.

34.Rxh4 Rb1+ ; 35.Kd2

Rxa1 ;

36.c4 Rb1 ; 37.Rf4 a1Q ;

38.Bxa1 Rxa1 ; 39.cxd5

Ra5 ;

40.Rxe4 , (Hmmm.)

I don't think it matters from here - What White plays.

( Bad is: < 40.c6? *Rxd5+* ;

winning for Black. ;

while *RR40.Ke3 Rxc5* ;

transposes back into my line.

).

40...Rxc5 ; 41.Ke3 *Kf7-+* ;

and now Black is two

Pawns

ahead with a relatively easy win in the endgame. {A.J.G.

}

November, 2011. ;

**C2b)** 32...Ba4+!? ;

This is pretty good for Black

...

[R. Knoebel proposes that the second player should try

(instead) the move of:

<sup>1</sup> 32...h6!; '<sub>μ</sub>' here.]

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---> Returning to the K.M.  
line(s):

33.Ke1™ , This was forced.  
( But not: < 33.Kc1??  
Rxe2-+ ).

33...Bxh4+! ; 34.Kf1™ ,  
The only move.  
( But not: < 34.Rxh4?? Rb1+  
, etc. ).

34...Bf6! ; 35.Bd4 ,  
Is this forced?  
( < 35.Bc1? Rc2 ; 36.Rh3  
Bb3-+ ).

35...Kf7! ; 36.Ke1 Bb3!?! ;  
Fritz 12 (initially) likes putting

the Black LSB on the c2-  
square  
here ... while the relatively  
simple move of 36...♙e6;  
also looks good to me.

37.Bxf6 gxf6! ; 38.Kf2  
, {D?}

Is this the best (here) for  
White?

( But definitely not:  
< 38.Rxh7+? Ke6 ; 39.Rh1

f5 ;  
40.Kf2!?! Bc4 ; 41.Rhe1 f4  
;

42.Kf1 Rxe2! ; 43.Rxe2  
f3-+ ;

and Black wins. - GM K.  
Mueller ).

38...Ke6! ; (hmmm)

This is good, but Black had  
an interesting alternative  
in this particular position.

.  
( Interesting was:  
RR38...Bc4! . ).

.  
39.Ke3 f5 ; 40.Rxh7 Rb1! ;  
41.Rh1™ Rxh1 ; 42.Rxh1

**C2b1**) The main line of  
their analysis

runs as follows:

42...Ke5! ; 43.Ba6!?! f4+ ;  
44.Kd2!?! d4!! ;  
45.Rh5+!?! Kf6 ;  
(Now 46.Rh1 looks forced.  
)

46.Rh6+!?! Kg5 ; 47.Rh1  
d3! ;

48.Ra1!?! Bc2!

; (hmmm)

Mueller (& company) like  
this move the best, here.

( Also possible was:

RR48...f3!?! ;

{A.J.G.} Tuesday; July 13th,  
2010. ).

49.Bxd3 Bxd3 ; 50.Rxa2  
Kg4 ;

51.Ra4!? Kg3μ ;  
 when Black clearly has the  
 upper  
 hand in this position.  
 ( Analysis by - Mueller &  
 Brueker.)

.  
 Now the prettiest  
 continuation is:  
 52.Ra7!? , (Too simple?)  
 This direct attack is the  
 only  
 line that is looked by the  
 sources that I found.

.  
 ( Or 52.Ra8 Bc4!-+ ;  
 is winning for Black.  
 - Fritz 12. )

**C2b11)** In July of 2011 ...

I returned to this game ...  
 ... ..  
 but, apparently, I got  
 sidetracked  
 and never finished what I  
 had  
 started so many months  
 before.

.  
 It seems that the PC's  
 and the  
 chess engines have  
 found yet  
 another improvement!  
 1 52...Bc4!! ; 53.Ra4  
 f3!! ;

**C2b111)** Or 54.Ke3 f2!  
 ; 55.Ra1 ,  
 Probably best.

.  
 ( Or White could try:  
 55.Rxc4 f1Q ;  
 56.Rxe4 Qf2+ ;  
 57.Kd3 Qxc5-+ .  
 This wins as before ...

.  
 Black ♠+♣+P vs. W's  
 ♣+|+P. ).

.  
 55...f1Q ; 56.Rxf1  
 Bxf1 ;  
 57.Kxe4 c6 ; 58.Kd4  
 Bg2-+ ;  
 and Black should win ...

.  
 without any great  
 difficulties. ;

**C2b112)** 54.Rxc4  
 , (2 greedy?)  
 White might as well go  
 ahead and capture here.

.  
 .  
 .  
 f2 ; 55.Rxe4 f1Q ;  
 56.Rd4 Qb5 ; 57.Rd5  
 Qc4 ;  
 58.Rd8 Qxc5-+ ;  
 and - according to an  
 endgame  
 tablebase - Black will  
 lose in

just 22 more moves.  
 (http://www.  
 shredderchess.com/  
 online-chess/online-  
 databases/  
 endgame-database.  
 html)

.  
 A.J. Goldsby I,  
 July - through - Sept;  
 2013. ;

**C2b12)** .

.  
 52...Kf2! ; (Best?)  
 This looks like the most  
 direct idea, Black tries to  
 shove his e-Pawn in.

\*\*\*    \*\*\*    \*\*\*    \*\*\*    \*\*\*    \*\*\*  
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 .  
 .  
 \*\*\*    \*\*\*    \*\*\*    \*\*\*    \*\*\*    \*\*\*  
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Returning to my original  
 analysis of the Russian  
 version  
 of this research.

53.Rxc7 Bc4!

; (Best.)

This keeps the WR off of  
 f7.

54.Re7 e3+ ; 55.Kd1

Be2+!! ;

56.Kc2 Bg4! ; 57.c6!?  
 f3 ;

58.Kd1 Kg2! ; 59.Rg7

e2+ ;  
 60.Kd2!? f2!! ;  
 61.Rxg4+ Kf1! ;  
 and Black wins ("-/+")  
 in all the pertinent  
 variations.  
 {A.J.G.}

.  
 Not to brag, but the main  
 line took several weeks of

computer-assisted  
 analysis  
 to work out.  
 (Some of the side-lines  
 are quite pretty too.)  
 ---> Late March, 2006.

.  
 I posted part of this  
 analysis - ending with  
 61...Kf1; "-/+" on the  
 "Chess Games" website

in May of 2006.  
 (See the web page of:  
<http://www.chessgames.com/perl/chessgame?gid=1027914>;  
 you may have to read  
 several  
 pages of kibitzing to find it.  
 )

.  
 Note: You can play

many  
different moves ... at just  
  
about any point in this  
analysis. However, Black  
  
seems to win, no matter

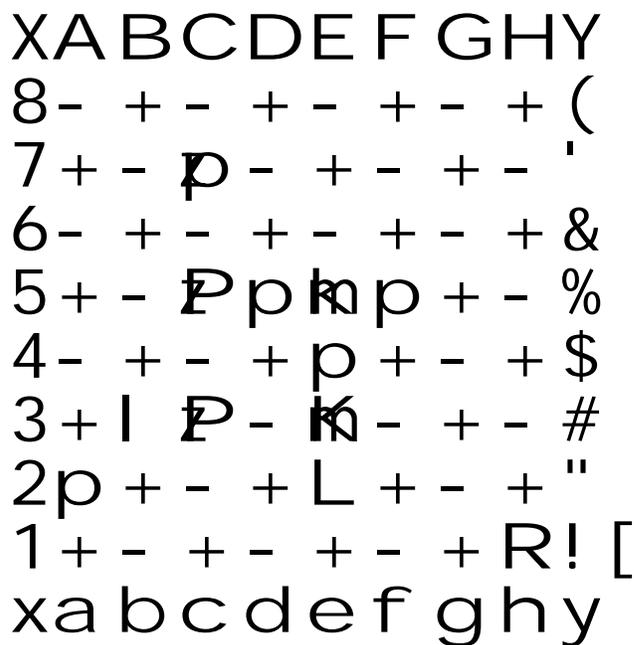
which path you want to  
take in your analysis of  
these complex and  
fascinating lines!

- A.J. Goldsby I;  
late Sept, 2013. ;  
**C2b2) 42...Ke5!**© ;  
(With "comp." for the  
material.)  
A key position of KM's line.

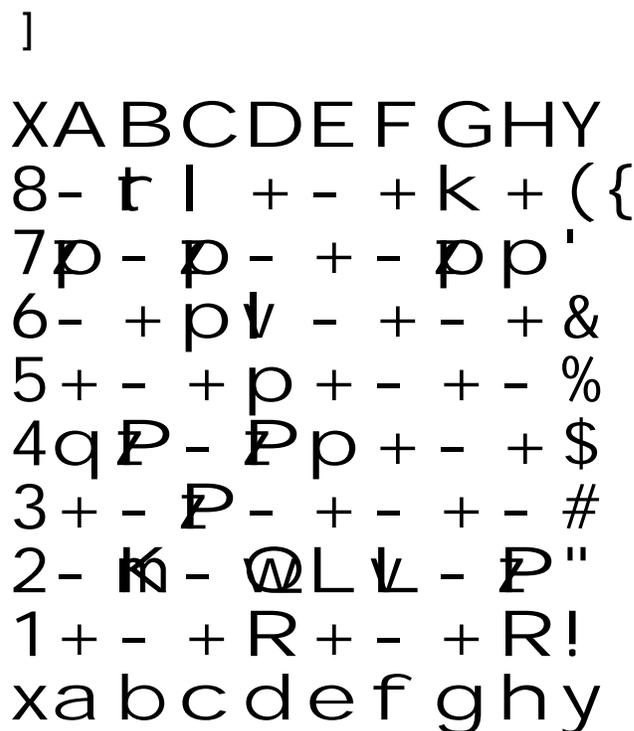
(Diagram)

GM Karsten Mueller, D.  
Brueker  
{and several Russian  
masters}  
have DEEPLY investigated  
this  
particular position ...  
... the conclusion seems to  
be  
that Black wins!

\*\*\*      \*\*\*      \*\*\*      \*\*\*



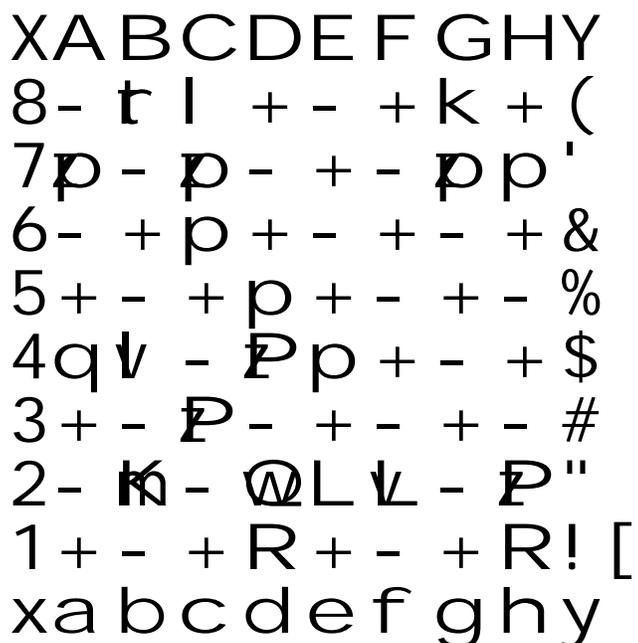
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The calm move of placing the WK  
on c1 was called for, although it  
would

have taken nerves of adamantium to make this decision here ... against this particular opponent.

**22...Bxb4!** ; (Simple and direct.)  
The rest is a rather simple mopping up operation for Morphy, who neatly ties up all of his loose ends.



White will soon be forced to surrender the Queen, after which the win is not too terribly difficult.

**23.cxb4™** , (Completely forced!)  
This looks bad for White, but just a

little work will quickly show that White has no real choice here.

[ <23.Bb5? Qa3+ ; 24.Kb1 Bxc3-+ ]

[. <23.Qc2?? Ba3+ ; 24.Ka2 Qxc2+ ; 25.Kxa3 Qb3# ]

[. <23.Ra1?? Ba3+ ; 24.Ka2 Bd6# .]

**23...Rxb4+ ; 24.Qxb4™** ,  
This was 100% forced.  
(If the WK goes to c3, then 24...£b3#; will be mate.)

[ <24.Kc1?? Qa1+ ; 25.Kc2 Qb2# .]

**24...Qxb4+ ; 25.Kc2!?** , (hmmm)  
Some sources have claimed that Kc2 was forced here, although all the engines seem to indicate that Ka2 might have been a better move for White. (However, nothing would save the game here for White, and I think that Bird had already figured this out. The general rule of thumb is that when your King is this exposed,

the fleeing monarch gets mated more quickly if he runs to the edge of the board, as opposed to heading towards the center of the field of battle.)

[White (also) gets smashed after he plays his King to a2. The proof?

RR25.Ka2 c5! ; 26.Rhf1 , OK. (White 'develops' a Rook ... there was nothing that was substantially better here.)

( Or 26.Be1!? Qa4+ ; 27.Kb2 Ba6! ;

28.Bxa6 Qxd1 ; "-/+"

Black is winning easily.

(Check it with any engine!) ).

26...c4 ; 27.Be1 Qb3+ ;

28.Ka1 c3 ; "-/+"

Black (also) wins here, White must shed more material to avoid the impending check-mate on the b2-square. (Rb1, Qa3#.) ]

**25...e3!** ; (Another sack here!)

Bird gave up some material, (The earlier Queen sack on b4.); hoping to break the force of Paul Morphy's attack.

However, this simple Pawn move

X A B C D E F G H Y

8 - + | + - + k + (

7 p - p - + - p p '

6 - + p + - + - + &

5 + - + p + - + - %

4 - ♖ - ♙ - + - + \$

3 + - + - p - + - #

2 - + K + L ♜ - ♞ "

1 + - + R + - + R! [

x a b c d e f g h y

was the surprise rejoinder that Bird had managed to miss in all of his earlier calculations.

If now 26.¥g3, then 26...Bf5+; 27.Bd3™, Qc4+; will win easily for Black.

**26.Bxe3 Bf5+ ; 27.Rd3™** , (Erg.)

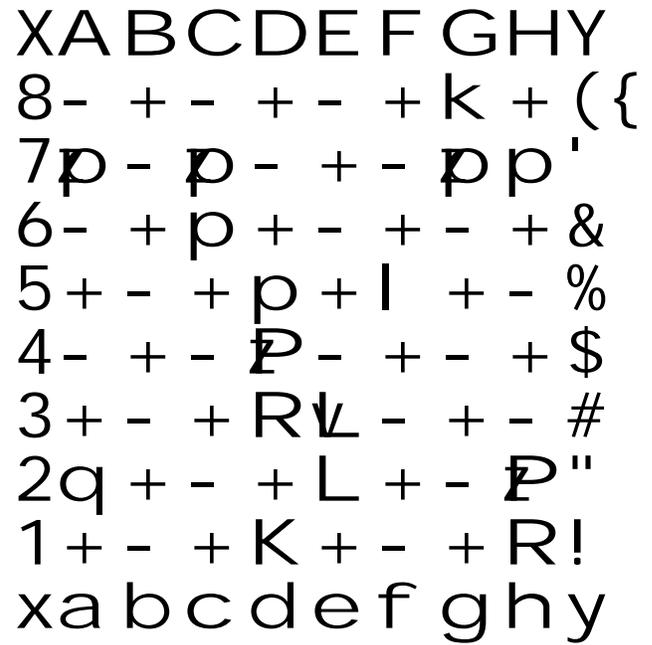
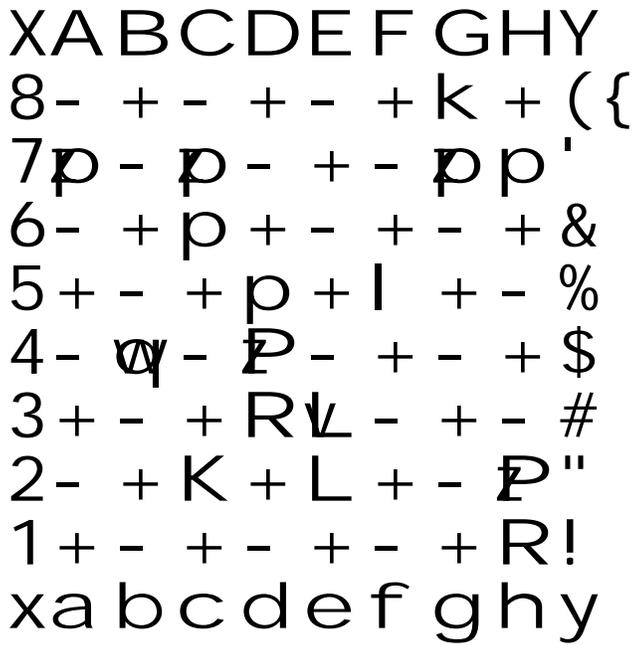
This is very ugly ... and it is also completely forced for master Bird. (I think that I would have resigned before playing such a move as Rd3.)

[Even worse would be:

< 27.Bd3?! Qc4+ ; 28.Kd2?? , Blind ambition?

( ^ 28.Kb2 Bxd3-+ ).

28...Qxd3+ ; "+/-" {Diag?} and White is swiftly mated. ]



.  
.  
.  
**27...Qc4+!** ; **28.Kd2 Qa2+!** ;  
**29.Kd1<sup>TM</sup>** , (Forced?!?)  
Otherwise, Black wins material.

.  
**29...Qb1+** ; ("-/+")  
White throws in the towel.  
[If the King moves, Black snares  
a whole Rook, (on h1); while if  
30.¥c1, then 30...¥x1/d3; ++  
is a very easy win for Black.]

[Or RR =29.Ke1 Bxd3-- ]

(Diagram)

(Diagram)

.  
Materially - at the moment - White  
has  
two Rooks AND a Bishop for the WQ  
that was lost ... ..

.  
One of the most brilliant  
combinations  
that Paul Morphy ever played; nearly  
150 years later, we are still debating  
the merits of the whole concept.

.  
.  
\*\*\*\*\*

```

XABCDEFGHIY
8- + - + - + k + (
7p - p - + - p p '
6- + p + - + - + &
5+ - + p + l + - %
4- + - P - + - + $
3+ - + R v - + - #
2- + - + L + - P "
1+ q + K + - + R! [
x a b c d e f g h y
    
```

\*\*\*\*

Bibliography

(Note that I own just about ALL the books in English that cover the playing career of Paul Morphy.)

Besides the many books that I own that are solely dedicated to this player,

(around 5-10 ... if memory serves); I also consulted the following works:

# 1.) The program: "ChessMaster, 10th Edition." (GM L. Christiansen's section on 'Attacking Chess.')

# 2.) The incredible volume: "My Great Predecessors, Part I" by the incomparable GM G. Kasparov. (Chapter one, game # 8, pg. # 37.)

# 3.) The excellent book: "<<PAUL MORPHY>> And The Evolution of Chess Theory," by Macon Shibut. (Copyright, 1993.)

ISBN: # 0-939433-18-8.  
 (See the analysis of this opening, it begins on page # 161.)  
 # 4.) The analysis in several different databases, most notably the one by GM Pavel Blatny on this game.  
 # 5.) The book: "The Development of Chess Style," by GM Max Euwe. (Revised by GM J. Nunn)  
 # 6.) "Morphy's Chess Masterpieces," by Fred Reinfeld and A. Soltis. (1974.)  
 {A former student sent a complete photocopy of their analysis; at the time; I did not yet own that book.}  
 # 7.) "New In Chess" magazine. (The 1992 yearbook.)  
 \*\*\*\*\*  
 \*\*\*\*\*  
 Strangely, GM Chris Ward ... in his book: "The Genius of Paul Morphy," ... does not even choose to annotate this particular game!!!!!!!!!!!!  
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