

and winning. And one night he showed us an incredible problem he had devised.



White is to play.

"Who is better?" Shirazi would ask, smiling. Then he would reach across for the White Queen and shove it into a nest of pawns . . .

1. Qg6!!

. . . when Black can capture in two ways.

(A)

1. . . . f×g6

2. Bd5 ch Nf7

3. Rxh7!

Planning 4. Rdh1

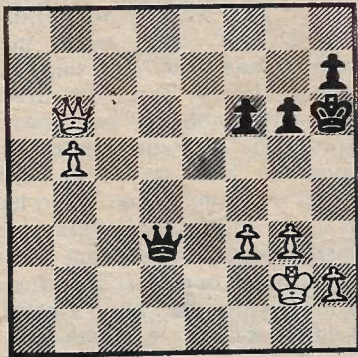
3. . . . K×h7

If any of 3. . . . RXa2, 3. . .

During the Civic Easter Tournament, the prize for Easter Bunny might well have gone to Vernon Small who took ill with a now-notorious migraine headache and had to withdraw from the last round, though he still had a chance of coming second equal.

In our game Small played well in a big time scramble and we adjourned with Small a pawn up. However, the next morning Vernon fell ill and after a few inaccurate moves in a tricky queen endgame we reached the following position.

Chandler



Small

I had just played Q (from d5) to d3, a fine move which assures Black of the draw. Play continued . . .

1. Q×f6 Qc2 ch!
2. Kh3 Qc8 ch!

And now if 3. Kh4 comes the stunning Queen sacrifice 3. . . . Qg4 ch! and no matter which way White captures it is stalemate! If White tries 3. g4 instead, again Black has 3. . . . Q×g4! Small had peered through his dark glasses just enough to see the stalemate by now and we agreed to a draw shortly afterwards.

Bd6 or 3. . . . c6, White replies 4. Rh8 ch! K×h8 5. B×f7 and 6. Rh1 ch etc next move.

4. B×f7 Kh6
5. Rh1 ch! Kg5
6. Rg1 ch K-any
7. B×g6

And White mates in all variations.

Now that the sub-variation is out of the way we get on to the hard stuff.

(B)

1. . . . h×g6

2. Bc6!!

The obvious 2. Bd5 gives White only a slight advantage in an opposite coloured bishop endgame. 2. Bd5 Nf5 3. N×f5 Bd6! 4. Rh8 ch K×h8 5. B×f7 Q×e3 6. N×e3 Bf4 7. Rh1 ch Bh6 9. Nc5 etc.

2. . . . Nf5
3. N×f5 g×f5

This time 3. . . . Q×e3

leaves Black a rook minus after 4. Rdh1 Qh6 5. N×h6 ch g×h6 6. B×a4, while 3. . . . Bd6 fails catastrophically to 4. Ne7 ch! Kf8 5. Rh8 ch K×e7 6. Re8 checkmate.

4. Rdh1 g5
5. Rh8 ch Kg7
6. Be8 f4

The only move.

7. R1h6 Be7

8. R6h7 ch!

8. e4? f5

8. . . . Kg6
9. e4 f5
10. e5 Rf6
11. Rh6 ch Kg7
12. e×f6 ch B×f6
13. R6h7 ch Kg6
14. B×f7 checkmate!

Shirazi said this masterpiece was the product of two years pottering and I can quite believe it.

MURRAY CHANDLER

Chess

Iranian puzzles

AFTER THE Burroughs Computers Grandmaster Tournament in Wellington had ended, most of the overseas participants departed within a few days, some for home, others to sight-see in Sydney. One who stayed was Kamran Shirazi of Iran who later travelled with me to Jakarta.

Twenty-six-year-old Shirazi is a semi-professional, and in

Wellington he was telling us of the difficulties he had trying to, time after time, produce his best form in tournaments. "There is no retirement scheme for chess-players!" he said. And if he was not more successful on the circuit he would consider taking up his studies again, when he returned to Iran.

If the promising Iranian did "retire" it would indeed

be a loss to Asian chess because he is obviously highly gifted. In Iran he played 24 simultaneous games blindfolded — that is without sight of the boards — and won 22, drew one and lost one!

In the local Wellington clubs he won the players admiration by taking on the local champions with only one minute on his clock, compared with their five —

