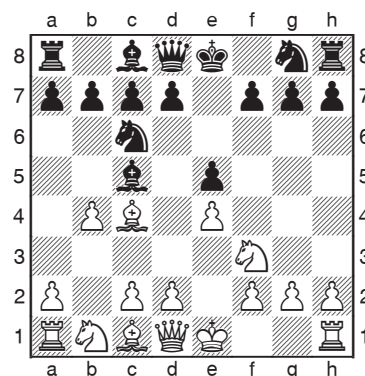


## Game 6

## Chigorin – Steinitz, Havana 1892

The Evans Gambit (C 52)

1.e2-e4            e7-e5  
 2.♘g1-f3        ♝b8-c6  
 3.♙f1-c4        ♙f8-c5  
 4.b2-b4



In the year 1824, William Evans – a military sailor – invented a new gambit. It was quite amazing that Evans learned to play chess very late in his life – he was 28 years old, and only 6 years later he started playing his gambit, which became immediately world famous. Evans became a celebrity not only in chess. He was an inventor in his job, too – he invented the system for signaling at sea. He was awarded a prize for that by the governments of both England and Russia.

It looks like there is not much to invent in the well-studied Italian Game, but the move 4.b2-b4! impressed numerous players and it soon became the favourite opening of the chess players of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The magnificent masters of the attacking chess Morphy, Anderssen and Chigorin made it a part of their offensive armor for White, and they introduced numerous new ideas in their analyses and games.

On the other hand, Steinitz and Lasker did not spare any efforts to find satisfactory defensive schemes for Black. They accepted boldly the sacrifice in key tournament encounters.

White sacrifices his b4-pawn to gain two tempi, and he occupies the centre after that. Later, he strives to open files for attack. Black manages to obtain equal game by giving back the gambit pawn at an

opportune moment. Thus he parries White's attempts to provoke wild complications.

The Evans Gambit is not completely forgotten nowadays either. Players like Timman, Sveshnikov, Larsen, Nunn and Fischer have used it. The ex-world champion Garry Kasparov scored a remarkable victory with that opening against Anand.

4...            ♙c5xb4

Black should better accept the sacrifice. The counter strike is not favourable for him: 4...d7-d5 5.e4xd5 ♝c6xb4 6.0-0 ♘g8-f6 7.♘f3xe5 ♝b4xd5 8.d2-d4 ♙c5-d6 9.♙c1-g5. White is slightly better in that position.

In case of 4...♙c5-b6 5.a2-a4 a7-a6 6.♝b1-c3! White has the advantage in the so-called Sokolski attack.

There arise mind-breaking complications after 4...♙c5-b6 5.b4-b5!? ♝c6-a5 6.♘f3xe5 ♘g8-h6 7.d2-d4 d7-d6 8.♙c1xh6 d6xe5 9.♙h6xg7 ♜h8-g8 10.♙c4xf7+ ♜e8xf7 11.♙g7xe5 ♜d8-g5 12.♝b1-d2.

4...♝c6xb4 5.c2-c3 ♝b4-c6 is only a transposition of moves.

? ? ?  
 5.

**5.c2-c3** (3 points)

I hope that you have already understood what the idea is behind the gambit. White occupies the centre, exploiting the placement of Black's bishop.

5...            ♙b4-a5

The other possibility for Black here is 5...♙b4-c5.

6.0-0            d7-d6

Presently, theory considers as best for White the move 6.d2-d4, because after 6.0-0 d7-d6 7.d2-d4 Black has the resource 7...♙a5-b6! This move was invented by Lasker. Chigorin and Steinitz learned about it only three years later. 8.d4xe5 d6xe5 9.♜d1xd8+ ♝c6xd8 10.♘f3xe5 ♙c8-e6 and Black equalizes.

7.d2-d4            ♙c8-g4

Steinitz prefers to fight for the e5-square.

? ? ?  
 8.

**8. ♖c4-b5** (2 points) **e5xd4**

**9. c3xd4**

Chigorin is threatening to follow with d4-d5. Thus he forces Black to exchange in the centre advantageously for his opponent. White has occupied the centre indeed, but the threat against the f7-square is not so dangerous anymore.

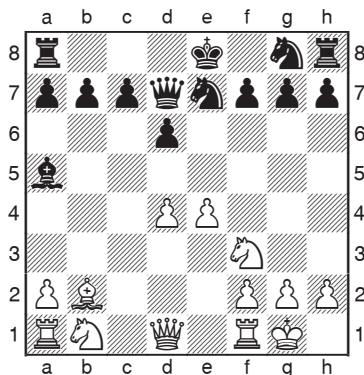
**9... ♗g4-d7**

White is not in a hurry to begin his attack in the centre. He has ample time to do that later. At first, he should complete the development of his pieces.

**10. ♖c1-b2 ♘c6-e7?**

Steinitz falls behind in development with this move. Later, he tried in some other games the resource 10... ♗g8-f6.

**11. ♗b5xd7+ ♕d8xd7**



? ? ?

**12.**

**12. ♖b1-a3!** (4 points)

White develops his knight at the edge of the board! Soon that piece would both attack the enemy bishop and it would help in the offensive against the king.

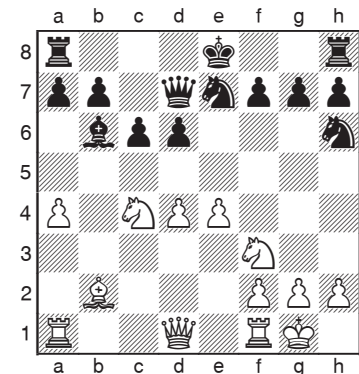
**12... ♗g8-h6**

**13. ♗a3-c4 ♖a5-b6**

? ? ?

**14.**

**14. a2-a4!** (3 points) **c7-c6**



White is threatening 15.a4-a5 and Black must push his c-pawn forward. That weakens the d6-square, but even after 14...a7-a6 15. ♖d1-b3, or 14...a7-a5 15. ♗c4xb6 c7xb6 16. ♖d1-b3 ♗e7-c8 17. ♖a1-c1 0-0 18.d4-d5, White remains clearly better.

? ? ?

**15.**

**15. e4-e5!** (3 points)

**15... ♗d6-d5**

Steinitz surrenders the d6-square immediately and he tries instead to bolster up the centre. The exchange would not equalize either, because of the penetration of White's rook: 15...d6xe5 16.d4xe5 ♖d7xd1 17. ♖a1xd1 0-0 18. ♖d1-d7; while after 15...♗b6-c7 Black loses, because of the pin: 16.e5xd6 ♗c7xd6 17. ♗c4xd6+ ♖d7xd6 18. ♗b2-a3 ♖d6-d5 19. ♖f1-e1 ♗h6-g8 20. ♖d1-e2 ♖d5-d7 21.d4-d5 c6xd5 22. ♗f3-e5.

**16. ♗c4-d6+ ♗e8-f8**

? ? ?

**17.**

**17. ♗b2-a3** (3 points)

White's bishop is in ambush here, eyeing Black's king.

**17... ♗f8-g8**

Black's king runs away in anticipation of the pin.