

## H. Rey gets anticipated twice!

by Harrie Grondijs

A. J. Neilson, Chess Ed, "Falkirk Herald"  
Treasurer of Glasgow Chess Club

Scotland, 7/11/39

To Mr. J. Selman Jr.

Dear Sirs,

Your favour re the Saavedra End-Game, duly to hand, & all you write is noted. Except myself there is no one now alive who can tell you *anything* about it from first-hand knowledge. Those who know about it here still, such as Mr. J. M. Nichol and Rev. John Young, (both old and good friends of my own), only know the facts as I have related to them, & as you say, the story has been often "muddled", by others, in the Press & elsewhere. The origin of the position was unusual, as it was not just a fresh invention, composed by Fr. F. Saavedra, for at least *three* others had a hand in it. It dates from the winter of 1896-1897 [sic], & first arose from the finish of an actual game in London between Messrs. *Potter & Fenton*, in which the **forces** were the same, but the position different. In 1896 [sic], this game was republished, & noted, in "Glasgow Weekly Citizen", by the late *Mons. Geo. Emil Barbier*, at that time a Professor of French resident in Glasgow, - a *very strong* player of *master-strength*, & a fine practical problem composer - who *edited* that Column for 4/5 years, till his death about 1898. Now, from the Potter-Fenton ending, *Mons. Barbier* conceived the *position as you know it*, & published it a week or two later, as a nice **draw-study** lesson for his readers, *only meaning* to show the *Queen* Promotion & the forced *Stalemate* caused by the forcible Rb5 ch! sacrifice. It caused some local interest, & amongst others, Fr. Saavedra solved it. But a couple of days or so later, he came up to the Glasgow Club in the afternoon, & astounded *Mons. Barbier* by announcing that his so-called *draw* was a **forcible Win**, by the **rook**-promotion, & play continued as you know! There was present *only* myself, *Barbier*, & another Frenchman, *Mons. Hector Rey* (both Frenchmen long since dead). *Mons. Barbier* again gave it in the Paper, crediting the new *solution* to Saavedra. I also then published it in my own Col. in "Falkirk Herald", as by *Saavedra*, & told the real story, - as I have *often* told it since! (I am quite tired of the wretched thing!!). What gave it further publicity was that I showed it to *Dr. E. Lasker*, when on a Glasgow visit a year or so after, & I also sent it for inclusion in *Tattersall's 1000 End-Games* later. Lasker seemed to be greatly taken by it at the time. He was World Champion by then.

As I thought Fr. Saavedra the real **finder** of the full implication of *Barbier's* study, I credited Saavedra as the "*author*", & I *believe* it was the only thing he ever published in Chess! (He, **himself**, didn't **claim** it!). Actually he was a slap-dash player, (of modest "skittle" strength), but a *keen* & good Problem-Solver. While in Glasgow, he was a great chess-friend of mine. When he re-appeared here in 1912, I **didn't even recognize him!** He was much older, & changed, with a **long whitish beard!** Formerly, he was a round-faced, spectacled, & clean-shaven man, with a merry twinkle in his eye, & full of fun, though very quick-tempered & impulsive. A *Spaniard*, who learned English in *Ireland*, & spoke with a very pronounced *Irish* accent (or brogue), I understood he was really of aristocratic Spanish descent. As the *Club Group Photo of 1897* is **certainly not lost**, but hangs there now, - contains Saavedra -, is **big, & framed, & heavy**, it couldn't be sent, even if permitted by the Club. I've a Copy in my house here, also framed, & it is about 3 feet long & 2 feet deep!! I strongly advise you to get Mr. Young to apply for **permit**

to send you the single photo you mention. The Group Photo we have is sadly faded now, & afraid no use to you. Rev. Mr. Young is very obliging, as he has never been a member of Glasgow C.C. Mr. J. M. Nichol is **away** & didn't join the Club till several years after the End-Game Episode. Your English is **perfect!** Hope my random remarks may help you.

Kind regards, Yours Sincerely,  
A.J. Neilson

### H. Rey gets anticipated for the first time...

At a young age Rey's career brought him to the French Embassy in Glasgow on a special mission.

Through Georges Barbier who had been living in Glasgow for decades he sought to join in with the local population and - hopefully - establish an intimate contact with the subject of his professional attention.

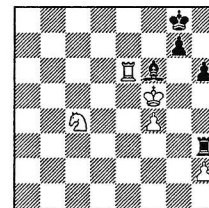
In the year of which Conan Doyle has Sherlock Holmes say, that it is a perfect year and that there is absolutely no reason at all why it should not remain 1895 forever, Rey got anticipated for the first time.

The outward circumstances of the incident are related in Neilson's letter to Selman. This is what happened in reality on that mizzling afternoon in spring (Monday, May 14th 1895 to be exact). Saavedra wanted to demonstrate to the editor and a few other club members the solution he had in mind to the chess problem that had been published the previous Saturday in Barbier's chess column in the 'Glasgow Weekly Citizen'. After a pawn had duly promoted no queen was within reach or sight. Instead a rook was turned upside down to represent it (as is sometimes done to this day - a deputy for the wanting piece). The sleeve of the priest's vestment played a trick on him after he captured the black rook with the would-be queen. Reverend Saavedra stretched out his arm for replacing the up-turned rook by a queen that he spotted behind Rey's elbow. Before the

Reverend could pick up the rook that had toppled over, Rey grabbed it from between his holy fingers and with a resounding BANG! he restored the rook to its true dignity.

Hector Rey had espied something new under the sun (something that the game player's world would first learn about many decades later, much to the embarrassment of a famous Grandmaster<sup>1</sup>) and being temperamental, in spite of thorough vocational training, for a brief moment of time he had allowed his passion to get the better of him.

All who were witnessing the scene or who were otherwise present in the room were perplexed. The priest's colour slowly turned a dangerous shade of purple. Such brutality was something the Reverend (who, in the words of Neilson could be:



donate to the Glasgow Chess Club, just like the irascible Father had done just a few years earlier, decided that for all times the honours of the 'discovery' should remain bestowed on Reverend Saavedra.

Rey took shelter from the chess world, he even played dead, when in reality he was alive and kicking in Paris. After his retirement from the Service he withdrew to Toulon and, at last, openly indulged in his passion for chess.

A small circle of French chess experts were astounded by his findings in some of the most difficult endings, and then, mistaking him for a Nobody, appropriated his ideas for the sole purpose of polishing up their own reputations.

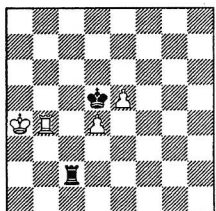
Today, when nothing short of a horrible chunk of inextricably entwined chess men can tickle our phantasies Rey's work has been characterized as: quite boring.

### H. Rey gets anticipated for the second time...

In November 1928 the following letter to the editor was published in full length in L'ÉCHIQUIER, the Belgian chess magazine.

### ROI, TOUR ET 2 PIONS DU CENTRE LIES CONTRE ROI ET TOUR

(le Roi noir placé entre les pions blancs)



H. Rey, L'Échiquier, 1928, +, 400.20

L'analyse de cette position fut faite en novembre 1924. Aussitôt terminée, je l'envoyai à G. Renaud, qui, après l'avoir examinée m'écrivit: *Je vous avoue franchement que le coup Tc6, qui est capital comme moyen défensif, m'avait complètement échappé et aussi Enfin, même si la position critique peut être forcée, personne ne se doute de son existence.*

Quelques autres études suivirent. Ces recherches furent interrompues à la fin de l'année 1924, pour raisons de santé. Elles ne furent pas reprises en 1925.

Ces études me furent rendues en mars 1926. Je communiquai alors la première à H. Rinck, le 7 avril 1926.

L'ÉCHIQUIER, ayant publié, quelques mois plus tard, le travail très beau de A. Chéron sur cette fin de partie, j'adressai au Directeur de L'ÉCHIQUIER, en août 1926, deux lettres établissant, d'une manière indiscutable, l'antériorité de mes recherches.

L'étude communiquée à H. Rinck, qui s'était égarée dans les papiers du maître, ne me fut renvoyée par lui que le 23 avril 1928, avec une lettre reconnaissant la priorité de cette étude.

**1. Ra5 Tc- 2. Ra6 Tc- 3. Rb7 Tc- 4. Rb8 Tc6! 5. Ta4!!** Les noirs sont en Zugzwang.

Ils doivent jouer:

1. Tour sur la colonne ou
2. Tour sur la traverse
3. le Roi

1. Tour sur la colonne

**5. ... Tc1 6. Ta7!! Tc6!**

6. ... Rxd4 7. e6 Rd5 8. e7 Te1 9. Rc8 Rd6 10. Rd8 Tb1 11. Td7† RC6 12. e8D

6. ... Tc4 7. Td7† Re6 8. Td6† Re7; (si 8. ... Rf5 9. e6 Rf6 10. d5 Tc5 11. Td7) 9. Rb7 Re8

(si ... 9. Tc1 10. Rb6 Tc2 11. Rc6 Td2 12. Rc5 Td1 13. Rd5 Td2 14. Tc7† Rd8 1. Ra7 Td1 16. Rc5 Td2 17. d5 -- 18. Rd6) 10. d5 Tc5

(si 10. ... Te4 11. e6 Re7 12. Td7† Re8 13. Rc6 Te6 14. Rd6;

si 10. ... Ta4 11. Rc7 Tc4† 12. Tc6 Te4 13. Rd6;

si 10. ... Tc1 11. e6 Tc2 12.

Td7 Tc1 [si 12. ... Td2 13. Rc6] 13. Tc7 Td1 14. Rc6; si 10. ... Re7 11. Tc6 Te4 [11. ... Td4 12. Tc7† Rd8 13. Rc6] 12. e6 Td4 [12. ... Rd8 13. Td6† Re7 14. Td7† Re8 15. Rc6] 13. Tc7† Rd8 14. Td7† Re8 15. Rc6)

11. Rb6 Tc1 12. Tc6 Td1 (si 12. ... Te1 13. e6 Rd8 [13. ... Re7 14. Tc7† Rd6 15. Td7† Re5 16. Rc7] 14. Rc5 Re7 15. Rc7† Rd8 16. Td7† Re8 17. Rd6) 13. Rc5 Rd7 (13. ... Re7 14. Tc7† Rd8 15. Rd6 Td2 16. Th7 Re8 17. e6) 14. e6† Re7 15. Tc7† Rd8 16. Td7† Re8 17. Rd6;

6. ... Td1 7. Td7† Re6 8. Rc7 Tc1† (si 8. ... Td2 9. Rd8 Td1 10. Td6† Rf7 11. e6†) 9. Rd8 Ta1 10. Td6† Rf7 11. e6†.

### 7. Td7† Re6 8. Tc7 Tb6† 9. Rc8 Ta6

9. ... Tb4 10. Tc6† Re7 11. d5 Ta4 12. Tc7† Re8 13. d6 Ta8† 14. Rb7 Ta1 15. Te7 Rd8 16. e6 Tc1 17. Th7 Tb1† 18. Ra7 Ta1† 19. Rb8 Tb1† 20. Tb7 Tc1 (si 20. ... Td1 21. Td7† Re8 22. Rc8) 21. e7† Re8 22. Tc7 Tb1† 23. Rc8 Td1 24. d7†; 9. ... Tb5 10. Tc6† Re7 11. Tc5 Tb4 12. d5 etc.;

9. ... Tb1 10. Tc6† Re7 11. d5 Ta1 12. Rc7† Re8 13. d6 Ta8† 14. Rb7 Td8 (si 14. ... Ta1 15. e6) 15. Tc8.

### 10. Rb7! Ta4

10. ... Ta5 11. Tc6† Rd7 (si 11. ... Re7 12. Tc5 Ta4(a1) 13. d5 Td4 14. Rc7 Td1 15. d6† Re6 16. Tc6) 12. Td6† Re7 13. d5 Tb5† 14. Rc6 Ta5 15. Td7† Re8 16. e6 Ta6† 17. Rc7 Ta7† 18. Rd6 Ta6† 19. Re5 Ra5 20. Tc7 Rd8 21. e7†;

10. ... Ta1 11. Tc6† Rd7 12. Td6 Re7 13. Rc6 Ta6† 14. Rd5 Ta5† 15. Re4 Tb5 16. Tc6 Rd7 17. Tc5 Tb1 18. Rd5 Tb6 19. e6† Re7 20. Tc7† Rd8 21. e7† Re8 22. Rc5 Te6 23. d5 Txe7 24. Txe7† Kxe7 25. Rc6.

### 11. Tc6† Rd7

11. ... Re7 12. d5 Td4 (si 12. ... Tb4† 13. Rc7 Ta4 14. d6† Rf7 15. d7 Ta7† 16. Rd6;

si 12. ... Te4 13. Rc7 Txe5 14. d6† Rf7 15. d7 Te7 16. Rc8)

### 13. d6† Rd7

(si 13. ... Rd8 14. e6 Tb4† 15. Tb6 Td6 16. Rc6 Rc8 17. d7† Rd8 18. Tb8† Re7 19. d8D†,

si 13. ... Re8 14. Rc8 Td5 15. e6 Td1! 16. d7 Re7 17. Tc7)

14. e6† Rxe6 15. Rc7 Td1 16. Tc2 Td3 17. Te2† Rf7 18. d7 Tc3† 19. Rd8.

### 12. d5 Td4

12. ... Tb4† 13. Tb6 Te4 14. e6† R- 15. Rc6;

12. ... Ta5 13. Td6† Re7 14. Rb6 Ta1 15. Tc6.

### 13. Tc7† Rd8 14. d6 Td1 15. Rc6 Td2

15. ... Tc1† 16. Rd5 Txc7 17. dxc7† Rxc7 18. Re6.

### 16. e6 Tc2† 17. Rb7 Tb2† 18. Ra8 Ta2†

18. ... Te2 19. e7† Re8 20. Rb8.

### 19. Rb8 Tb2† 20. Tb7 Td2 21. Td7† Re8 22. Rc8

2. Tour sur la traverse

### 5. ... Tg6

5. ... Tb6† 6. Rc7 Tc6† 7. Rd7 Tb6 8. Ta5† Rxd4 9. e6 Tb7† 10. Re8 Tb8† 11. Rf7 Th8 12. e7 Th7† 13. Re6 Th6† 14. Rd7.

### 6. Rc7 Tg7†

6. ... Th6 7. Rd7 Tg6 (si 7. ... Th7† 8. Re8 Tb7 9. Ta5† Rxd4 10. e6) 8. Ta5† Rxd4 9. e6.

### 7. Rd8 Th7

7. ... Tg6 8. Re7 Tb6 9. Rf7 Tc6 10. e6 Txe6 11. Ta5†, 7. ... Th8† 8. Re7 Th7† 9. Rf6 Th6† 10. Rg5 Tb6 11. Rf5 Tc6 12. Ta7 Rxd4 13. e6 Rd5 14. e7 Tc8 15. Rf6 Rd6 16. Rf7.

### 8. Ta6 Rxd4 9. e6 Th6 10. Ta4† Rc5 11. e7

3. *le Roi joue*

5. ... **Re6 6. Rb7 Tc1 7. Ta6† Re7**  
7. ... Rd7 8. e6† Re7 9. d5 Tc5 10.  
d6† Rxe6 11. Tc6 Td5 12. Rc7 Td1  
13. Tc2.

8. **d5 Tc2 9. Tc6 Td2**  
9. ... Te2 10. Rc8 Txe5 11. d6† Rf7  
12. d7.

10. **d6† Rd8 11. e6**

Ou

5. ... **Re4 6. Rb7 Th6 7. Ta6 Th7† 8. Rc8  
Th8†**

8. ... Rxd4 9. e6 Rd5 10. Rd8 Th6  
11. Rd7 Tg6 12. Ta5† Rd4 13. e7.

9. **Rd7 Th7† 10. Rd6 Th6† 11. e6 Rf5 12.  
Rd7 Tg6 13. d5 Re5 14. Ta5 -- 15. e7.**

4. *Autres défenses*

(1. Ra5 Tc8 2. Ra6)

2. ... **Ta8† 3. Rb7 Tg8**

3. ... Th8 4. Rc7 Th7† 5. Rd8 Th6

6. Re7 Th7† 7. Rf6 Th6† 8. Rg5

Ta6 9. Rf5 Ta8 10. Tb6 Tf8† 11.  
Tf6 Te8 12. e6 Rd6 (si 12. ... Rxd4  
13. Tf7 Rd5 14. Rd7† Rc6 15. Rf6)  
13. e7† Rxe7 14. Te6† R- 15. Txe8  
Rxe8 16. Re6.

4. **Rc7 Tg7† 5. Rd8 Th7**

5. ... Tg6 6. Re7 Tg7† (si 6. ... Te6†  
7. Rf7 Ta6 8. e6 Txe6 9. Txb5†  
Rc6 10. d5†) 7. Rf6 Th7 8. e6 Th6†  
9. Rf7 Th7† 10. Rg6 Te7 11. Rf5  
Te8 12. Tb7 Tf8† 13. Tf7 Te8 14.  
Td7† Rc6 15. d5† Rc5 16. Rf6.

6. **Tb6 Th8†**

6. ... Rxd4 7. e6 Rc5 8. Ta6 Rb5 9.  
Td6 Rc5 10. Td7.

7. **Re7 Th7† 8. Rf8 Rxd4**

8. ... Rh8† 9. Rg7 Td8 (si 9. ... Te8  
10. Rf7 Th8 11. Td6† R- 12. e6)  
10. e6.

9. **e6 Rc5 10. Ta6 Rb5 11. Td6 Rc5 12.  
Td7**

Si 1. ... Tc6 2. Tb6 T- 3. Td6†.

*Commandant H. Rey*

Chéron's reply to Rey's implications can be read in the December 1928 issue of L'ÉCHIQUIER.

Not that the matter bears that much importance at all - if you ask me! The Rey study is flawed with a minor dual in the king's approach to c2, and the rook versus rook and pawn ending is not something a normal human being would be capable of demonstrating at his chess club.

No, the cruel fate that struck Saavedra in Australia (some years before his return to Glasgow) was much more dramatic and would bear grave consequences for the history of mankind.