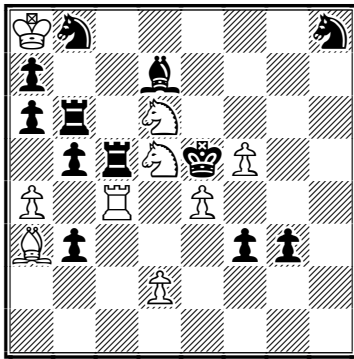Some examples of the excelsior theme in compositions, by Michael McDowell

(C.N. 8282 - Chess Notes, 15 September 2013.)

Robert B.Wormald
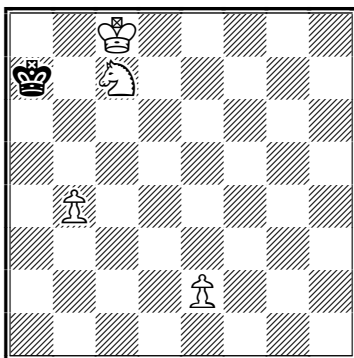Illustrated London News 14th March 1857

Mate in 5

1.d4+ Kxd6
2.dxc5+ Kc6
3.cxb6+ bxc4
4.bxa7 any
5.axb8N

Thought to be the earliest problem which featured the excelsior theme.
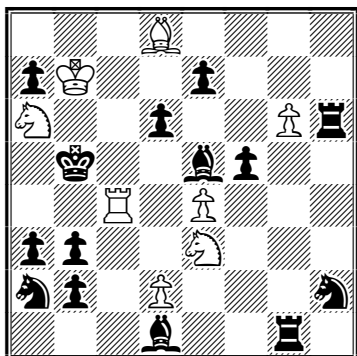
Poul Rasch Nielsen
Skakbladet 1951

Mate in 7

1.e3! Kb6 2.e4 K any 3.e5…5.e7 Kb6 6.e8Q Ka7 7.Qe3
                                Kd6 6.e8R Kc6 7.Rc6

Tempo move and two promotions.

Hans Peter Rehm
1st Prize The Problemist 1978 (version)

Mate in 13

1.d4? Bxd4? 1.Nc7+, but 1…Rh8!

1.Nc7+ Ka5
2.Nd5+ Kb5
3.d4 (threat 4.Rb4+ Nxb4 5.Nc3+; if 3…Bxd4 4.Nc7+ 5.Rxd4 6.Na6+/Nc4 7.Rd5+/Nxa3+) 3…b1N
4.Nc7+
5.Ne6+
6.dxe5 Nf3! (6…dxe5? 7.Nc7+ 8.Na6+)
7.Nc7+
8.Na6+
9.exd6 b2 (9…exd6? 10.Nc7+ 11.Ne8+)
10.dxe7 Rgxg6 (best)
11.Nc7+
12.Ne6+
13.e8Q (or B)

The knight must be manoeuvred into the correct position to prepare each advance of the pawn.