

The Wedding Eve;

Or, Married to a Fairy.

CHAPTER XIX.—(Continued).

"That sounds very charming, but it would not prevent you from feeling hurt and angry when your relatives snubbed and ignored your wife. I understand the arrangement. But she would be a fair consideration of a union which I may be considered cynical, but I am always inclined to the belief that the peasant wife of the Lord of Burleigh faded away and died. On account of the burden of an honor into which she was not born, but because she really could not endure the snubs of her husband's high-born female relatives. Why should poor little Lillith, who is really very happy and contented as she is, have to submit to a similar ordeal?"

"She herself is the best judge of what she can or cannot endure," I said. "May I see her?"

Mrs. Morland rose with alacrity. "I will fetch her," she said. "But you must not be too much discouraged if she says No. She likes you very much as a friend, but the child has no thoughts of marriage, nor will she have for years to come in all probability. Her temperament is by no means passionate, and she is more child than woman still."

She was leaving the room when I sprang from my seat and stopped her. "May I ask," I said, "that some one be sent to fetch Lillith here? I want to be myself the first to tell her of my wishes. Will you let me ring for the maid?"

I had my hand on the bell as I spoke, so that she could not refuse me; but I could see quite well that she did not relish the arrangement. But she acceded in a graceful and ladylike manner, resuming her seat and giving orders, to the servant who entered, to ask Miss Saxon to come to the drawing-room.

My heart thumped fast, as I waited during the short interval before Lillith's appearance.

What would she say? How would she look? Would she wear the white frock in which I had last seen her? She soon solved all doubts, entering like a dream of youth and beauty, in Parisian-looking loose blouse of rose-colored lawn and white lace insertion over a skirt of fawn-colored silk, a rose-colored silk sash round her waist, and a lovely color in her cheeks and brightness in her dancing eyes.

It is strange how dress alters a woman. With her hair elegantly dressed high on her head and low down on the nape of her neck, her little feet encased in silk stockings and French high-heeled slippers, and one gold bangle on her left wrist, she looked no longer the lovely artist's model I had last seen, but a beautiful and refined young lady. Had she entered in rags, my love and her beauty would have stood the test bravely; but as it was I felt myself with pride that she would have been a fitting wife for a prince, and that a prince might well congratulate himself over winning such a prize.

"Lillith," Mrs. Morland began hastily, and in evident nervousness "Mr. Hervey has come down here to say something to you—something which I think will surprise you very much. A swift glance, the purport of which I did not understand, was exchanged by the two women, and Lillith grew suddenly very pale.

I was shaking hands with her by this time, and held her hand a long time within my own.

"You are not angry with me, are you?" she said artlessly, looking up into my face.

"So far from being angry with you, I said, taking her two hands, and holding them close, "that I have come today to ask you to be my wife."

She stood at me with dilated eyes, and then looked away, and began to laugh in a nervous, half-hysterical manner.

"How absurd!" she exclaimed. "But, of course, you are joking. I am sure, Lady Margaret would be cross if she heard you talk such nonsense."

"Lady Margaret has nothing to do with it," I said, still retaining her hands and trying to make her averted eyes meet mine. "We are no longer engaged. We never loved each other, and we have found out our mistake now. I have always loved you, Lillith, and I want you to try and love me."

"Oh, no! It's impossible. You can't be in earnest. You must forget all this at once. It's quite out of the question!" panted Lillith in excitement which it was painful to witness.

Then, suddenly wrenching her hands from mine, she burst into a passion of tears.

Mrs. Morland put her arms affectionately round the sobbing girl, and tried to soothe her, glancing significantly at me over Lillith's shoulder the while.

"Lillith is not strong," she said, "and the shock and surprise have been too much for her. If you will leave us alone for a few minutes," I suggested, "I will try and reason with her until she gets used to the idea."

"She will never get used to the idea," Mrs. Morland returned emphatically. "Lillith has a great dislike for the very idea of marriage. I was just the same at her age. Consider how very young she is—"

"Will you allow me to speak to her alone?" I repeated softly; and Mrs. Morland, with a slight deprecatory shrug of her shoulders and lifting of her eyebrows, released Lillith from her embrace and rustled out of the room.

The door had hardly closed upon her a very evident wish to escape a tete-a-tete interview with me. I intercepted when Lillith made a spring toward it, in her, and taking her hand in mine, I led her to a seat. I do not deny that I felt flattered and pained by the manner in which my proposal had been received. Had I been halt, or maimed, or blind, instead of a healthy and passable-looking man of eight-and-twenty, my offer could not apparently have inspired greater repugnance and alarm.

"Tell me, Lillith, dear," I said very gently, seating myself on the sofa by her side, "why should the idea of marrying me seem so dreadful to you? I thought you were fond of me and happy with me. It did not seem so very long ago that you wanted to be always with me. Have you already forgotten?"

"I was a child then," she faltered, blushing crimson.

"You are not much more than a child now. Listen, dear. I am not rich, and you say you are extravagant. But I have no doubt I shall be able to make you as much as you will want to spend. I have an allowance of a thousand a year, and at present I am making as much by my art."

tell you that I am godson and grand-nephew to old Admiral Blackston, who bought my last large painting of a Neapolitan fishing-fleet for five hundred pounds, and that he always talks of leaving me something. But it is better to trust to what I shall make myself; and, with you to work for, you to inspire me, I am certain of wealth and fame. I only tell you these things, darling, because I know you are fond of spending money, and I don't know what else I can say to induce you to like me better."

"I do like you," she said, looking up at me, her blue eyes streaming with tears. "I am very fond of you, indeed, and very grateful to you, and you are very handsome and clever and kind, and the nephew of an earl, and a genius—I know all that, and I have often been told about it. But you must not marry any one like me—a little beggar girl that danced about in taverns for her living. It is quite, quite out of the question. And it's only a sudden notion of yours, or why didn't you tell me when you put me here to show that you meant to take me out and marry me at the end of a year? I am sure I was miserable enough then to want some comforting."

"I was not free then, dear, or I would gladly have done so," I telegraphed to Mrs. Morland yesterday within an hour of having my engagement dissolved by Lady Margaret Lorimer.

"You thought of me directly?" she said, looking at me for a few seconds intently in silence. Then she gave a quick little sigh. "It is too late," she said. "I have changed my mind altogether within the past year. I don't love you any more at all. And I shall never marry any one."

CHAPTER XX.

I did not stay at Bristol that night, as I had intended doing. I departed back to town, after a tete-a-tete talk with Mrs. Morland had succeeded a tete-a-tete talk with Lillith.

I could not take no for an answer. There was something odd and reserved about Lillith's manner, and her attempts at friendly deception with her unaccountable aversion against the idea of becoming my wife induced me not unnaturally to believe that girlish caprice was at the bottom of her refusal of my offer.

She had terminated our interview by suddenly dashing from the room in a flood of tears. Just before, she had owned that nobody had ever done her good to her as I had done, and that she had ever loved her. She strenuously negated my suggestion that she had another sweetheart, assuring me that such was far from being the case.

"I have never loved any one else, as you know," she said. "How should I? I am sure no one could be half so good to me as you. But I can't marry you, and you mustn't ask me. Your grand relatives would be always looking upon me, wouldn't they now? And that splendidly dressed cousin of yours, whom you were going to marry, would want to kill me. No, you mustn't call me changeable. I know I would have jumped at the thought of marrying you in a year had you asked me at Lythinge. But I'm ever so much older now, and I know that when a man marries beneath him, he is always sorry, and makes his wife sorry too. And I'm not really a bit civilized. I like picknicking better than dining, and I feel uncomfortable when servants stand about in the room during meals. Do you remember how I wanted Mr. Wrenshaw, as I called him, to have his dinner with us? Well, I'm just a little better than that now. I know the names of things, and how to pronounce them in French, and I can pick out tunes with the notes on the piano, and I don't make mistakes in grammar and utter the common expressions I used to. I've been too much scolded for that. But at least I am very much the little girl I used to be, and I never look at the sea without longing to take off my shoes and stockings and bound along with bare feet at the edge of the waves. And I hate women just as much as ever. Men I like, and I love the smell of tobacco, and do enjoy a puff at a cigarette now and then. But women are so prim. I hate the girls here, who all pretend to be nice, and are always trying to be thought fine ladies and something much grander than they really are."

"And I never hear an organ in the street without wanting to catch up my skirts and dance to it, as I used to when I was a little child. And one thing more I must tell you—when I've been many weeks living in a civilized sort of way, all of a sudden a great longing comes to me to be up and out of it all, like in the old days when father and I got up before daylight, and crept out of some barn where we'd stolen in, and went in search of the sea, and it was by the farmer's lads. I don't like houses overmuch; they stifle me, somehow. And I hate stopping in the same place long. I want to be out under the blue sky and in sound of the sea. Oh, I'm not it to be a gentleman's wife, Mr. Hervey, and if you'd seen a bit more of me during the past fourteen months, you'd know it."

There was a touch of sadness, almost of bitterness, if bitterness were possible in Lillith, ringing through her tones. But, loving her as I did, every word she uttered brought her nearer to me.

"You will be an artist's wife," I said, "and you have the artist temperament. I am no fonder of houses or affected, stuck-up people than you are. I chafe just as you do at the silly restrictions of society, and I would have been a more open existence. And I cannot live long away from the call of the sea. So that we have all these tastes, which you think are against you, entirely in common."

"But," I said, "won't you call me Adrian? And won't you try to feel a little fond of me?"

"I will call you Adrian, if you like, and I am very, very fond of you. But I can never, never be your wife!"

And with that she had burst out crying and fled from the room.

To her had succeeded Mrs. Morland, the sweet-voiced, comfortable, and comforting. She strongly advised me to go back to town, and return in a few days to see whether in the interval Lillith had grown used to the idea of marrying me. It was Thursday, why not come again on Monday, to receive her final answer?

When I hesitated, Mrs. Morland hastened to assure me that she herself would do her utmost on my behalf.

"It is she, not I, who would be conferring an honor," I said, "and I should not dream of waiting a year. If I had my way, Lillith and I would be married to-morrow."

Mrs. Morland shook her finger at me with indulgent playfulness. "You young men are so tempestuous and impatient!" she exclaimed. "Anyhow, wait until Monday and be assured I will do my very best to advance your cause."

I did not in the least believe her. It seemed to me that her manner betrayed a most patent artificiality, and that her tones rang false. I had not seen her for so long a time, and I had therefore inclined to note that the purring quality of her voice was accompanied by a very fine look in her scintillating, almost pupilless, green-gray eyes, began to dislike the woman whom I already trusted, and I rose somewhat abruptly.

"I will come again on Monday, as you suggest," I said. "But may I ask that Lillith be here to see me, and not either with assistant teachers at Ilfracombe, or with school-fellows at Weston-super-Mare?"

The shot told home. Mrs. Morland's clear skin grew crimson, and her pupils seemed to contract as she glanced at me sidelong.

"That is really unkind of you," she murmured, in gentle remonstrance. "I would never have let her leave my roof for half an hour had I guessed that you trusted and I rose somewhat abruptly."

"I could not even bid Lillith farewell. She was locked in her own room, so I was told, and did not feel equal to seeing me again. So, puzzled, disappointed, and profoundly hurt, yet by no means hostile, I left Morland's House and drove back to the station, where I had left my bag, having been too eager to see Lillith to drive first to a hotel."

The more I thought about her conduct, the more firmly I believed that some pressure was being exercised to induce her to behave with such strange caprice. Doubtless Mrs. Morland would prefer to keep for another year a pupil on whose behalf two hundred a year was paid by regular quarterly instalments. On Monday, however, I would, so I determined, take Lillith away from the influence of Morland House for the entire afternoon, so that I might induce her to speak without reserve.

The train steamed into London on a foggy and depressing autumn evening. Nothing much was doing in either way, and I therefore spent the time in perusing the papers exhibited along the sidewalk, the chief item appearing to be "Death of a British admiral from sunstroke in Virginia."

My great-uncle, Admiral Adrian Blackston, whom, as a child, I had only once seen, had, so I recollected, some property near Richmond, Virginia, and I therefore expended a halfpenny to discover whether the paragraph referred to him. Standing under a gas-lamp near the entrance to the station, I scanned the columns of the paper, and checked any one whose name I recognized. It was indeed my distinguished relative, my mother's uncle, a man of seventy-two, whose death was chronicled there.

Already he had been dead some days, for his estate was situated in a country district, and the news had apparently only just reached London. In him I had lost an art patron, for he had recently bought one of my pictures, and had expressed himself as highly delighted with it. Naturally I was sorry for the old gentleman, but a man of twenty-eight, very much in love for the first time cannot be expected to cherish any very deep feeling for a distant connection over three-score years and ten, whose very appearance is unfamiliar to him.

I crushed the paper in my pocket, together with another which I purchased to glean further details, which last told me that "the late distinguished officer was nearly related to the brilliant young marine painter, Adrian Hervey, A.R.A., Mr. Hervey's mother having been the Honorable Clara Blackston, Admiral Blackston's niece."

At my studio I found Wray, who exclaimed: "Back again, Hervey! I thought you were expected until to-morrow?"

"Then why in the world did you call?" I asked testily, for I had no wish to meet the man at that moment.

"Oh, to plague you with news here, and to answer impertinently. 'But Wrenshaw was not to be touched. Now you've come, it's all right. I'll come in with you.'"

I stood on the door-step in the worst of tempers.

"Frankly, Wray, I am not in talking humor."

"Nor am I. But I'm in smoking humor, if you'll let me have a pinch of tobacco. Do Hervey, I haven't smoked since yesterday, and I'm expiring for a pipe."

"Come up, then," I said, suppressing a sigh, "but don't stay long, as my good fellow wouldn't be drawn into talking to-night if a fortune depended upon it."

"All right. I'll take the tobacco and go." (To be continued.)

GOLD TEETH OF ANCIENTS.

Molars Lashed With Gold Wire to Prevent Falling Out.

In the light thrown upon the ancient practice of medicine and surgery by the Museum of Historical Medicine that has just been opened in Wigmore street, Marylebone, London, England, is a ray cast upon the Queen of Sheba's teeth, which have been loaned to the Royal College of Surgeons. These teeth have hitherto been naught but a solid black mass of bone and gold. They are now known to be something else, according to the exhibits made in the department of prehistoric dentistry.

Relics contained there prove that gold was freely used to improve awkward teeth, but there is no trace of a stopping for a decayed spot. The procedure seems to have been to lash the teeth together with a silk-like gold wire and to wind it around and around all the teeth until their binding was so strong that none of them could fall out without the consent of the others. This accounts for the fact that the Queen of Sheba's teeth appear like one solid mass.

Nearly 15,000 women immigrated from Ireland during the last year, and since 1851 there have been over 2,000,000 who have left the Emerald Isle for other places.

Six months after marriage a woman begins to feel a kindly interest in the man she could have married but didn't.

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THE PRINCESS OF EUROPE.

Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope Was Very Eccentric.

In an old book published in Paris under the title of "Le Journal d'un Voyage au Levant," there is an amusing account of the way in which Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope, the eccentric English traveler, took possession of the house at Djoun, where eventually she made her permanent home.

She was pleased with the house and its surrounding gardens, and accepted an invitation to dinner. As she sat after dinner, with the owner, a Christian merchant, he said to her that if she liked the place, he should be glad if she would stay the night. When she said that she liked it so much that she would stay there the rest of her days, he took it as a polite figure of speech; but a fortnight later, as she still prolonged her visit, he suggested that Europe might be expected her return.

"I do not intend to return," she replied, carelessly.

"Ah, then you intend to build a palace in the neighborhood?" said he.

"No, this house suits me very well."

"But I cannot let it or sell it, milady."

"I do not wish to hire it or buy it, but I intend to keep it," was the startling reply.

In this dilemma the merchant dispatched a messenger posthaste to Emir Beshyr, who sent word to Lady Hester that she must give up the house. Lady Hester, however, wrote to Constantinople, whence a courier came to the Emir, bearing the order, "Obey the princess of Europe in everything."

So the disgusted merchant fled, leaving her ladyship in possession. There for twenty years she lived the life of a recluse, growing more and more withdrawn from the world, and more accustomed to dwell in a mental and spiritual realm of her own creation, until she died, and was buried in the garden of the house that she had usurped.

A Prophetess Disappointed.

The Seeress—You will soon marry a man with loads of money who will give you a princely allowance. Two dollars, please.

The Customer—I'll pay you out of the allowance. Good-bye!

CAPTAINS NOT HIGHLY PAID.

Average Salary of Commander of Linc Is \$4,000.

Shipbuilders are endeavoring to construct vessels for the passenger-carrying trade in the Atlantic that are as near as unsinkable as human skill can devise, and it is suggested by captains of experience that the steamship companies should endeavor to get the highest grade of young men obtainable to train as officers, and eventually to be commanders of those vessels, which require brains to navigate them in time of need. The various companies have realized this recently and raised the pay of their officers all round and given them between-quarters in the new ships.

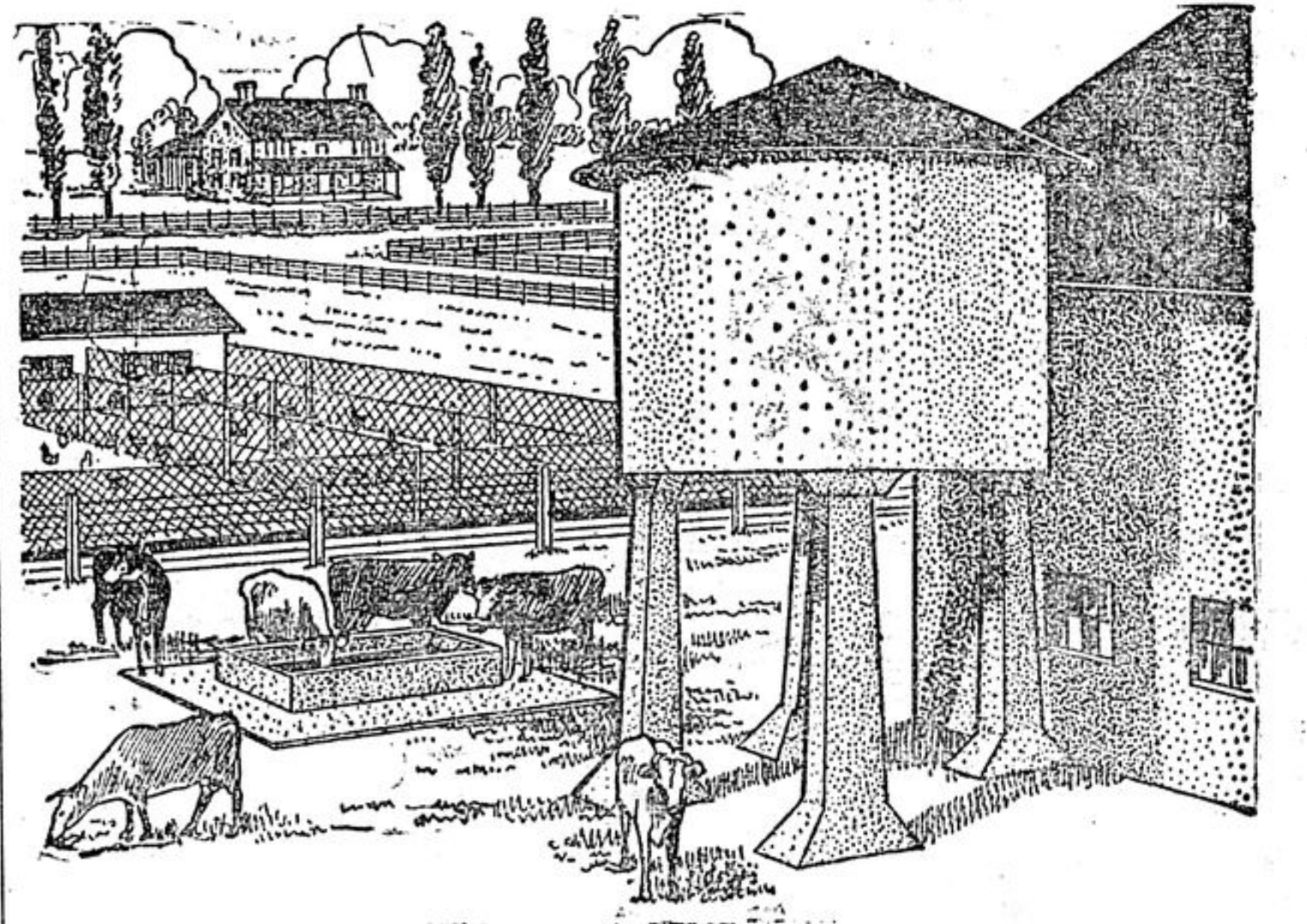
At the present time the average pay of the captain of an Atlantic liner is not over \$4,000 a year, and there is only one commander who draws \$6,000.

Certain companies give their commanders \$1,000 a year for what is called conditional money. Half of this amount goes into the pension fund and the remaining \$500 is given to the captain in cash. That is, unless he meets with any slight accident, such as knocking a small hole in an iron shed and doing about \$100 worth of damage, touching the mud, even without injuring the ship's hull, or getting two or three ventilators washed overboard by a big sea. In this event the captain really loses his bonus for two years, as the whole amount the following year is swallowed up by the pension fund. This is what the directors of the companies call disciplining their commanders, who, in turn, describe the action as treating them like naughty children, instead of men who hold, when they are afloat, one of the most responsible positions in the world.

The Other Woman.

"I don't see how that woman can gad about the way she does and neglect her little children." "How do you know that she gads about?" "We get the same girl to take care of our babies when we're away from home, and she's kept busy over there fully half the time. It provokes me so to have to be put off so often when I want to get away."

Maud—You seem to like Jack's attentions. Why don't you marry him? Marie—Because I like his attentions.



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