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Travellers' Guide.

GRAND TRUNK R.R. NORTH-WESTERN. GOING SOUTH. Mail 8.45 P.M. Express 10.42 A.M. 5.33 P.M.

CREDIT VALLEY RAILWAY. GOING WEST. 9.34 A.M. 3.27 P.M. 5.55 P.M. GOING EAST. 7.31 A.M. 3.3 P.M. 7.04 P.M.

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YOUNG GIRL'S WOOING.

By L. P. ROE,

Sombre Rivals," "Fro[illegible]arnest," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

"OUR EYES ARE VERY BLIND."

[illegible]neral rule Graydon was not [illegible] of nerves, and had received the fact of their existence largely on faith. But to-day they asserted themselves in a manner which excited his surprise and some rather curious speculation. He found his heart beating in a way difficult to account for on a physiological basis, his pulse fluttering, and his thoughts in a luminous haze, wherein nothing was very distinct except Madge's flushing face, startled eyes, looking a protest through their tears. It was not so much an indignant protest as it was a frightened one, he half imagined. And why was he so [illegible]sed and disturbed that, instead of acting quietly down in the porch as he had intended, he was impelled to walk restlessly to a neighboring grove! For one so intensely fraternal he felt he was continuing to "take on" in a very unnecessary style.

The demon of restlessness soon drove him back to the house again, and he learned that there would be a train in about two hours. They would still have time to dine at the Kaaterskill and return before night. He therefore made arrangements to be driven to the station, also to have the horse he had ridden and the saddles, taken back to the Under Cliff House.

There was a faint underglow on Madge's cheeks when she joined him at the substantial repast which Mr. and Mrs. Hobson insisted upon their taking before departure; but in all other respects she appeared and acted as usual. With a fineness of tact she was at home among her plain entertainers, and put them at ease. Mrs. Hobson spoke of her as Graydon's sister, and he darted a humorous glance at the girl; but it met such a grave impassiveness of expression that he feared she was angry. When parting from her hostess Madge spoke words which left a genial expression on the good dame's face for hours thereafter, and at the station Graydon put in Mr. Hobson's hand more than he could have gathered from his stony farm that day, although he had been called from the harvest field.

During the first mile or two in the cars Madge was very quiet, and seemed almost wholly engrossed with the scenery. At last Graydon leaned toward her and asked, "Are you vexed with me, Madge?"

"I had that I must maintain my self-[illegible] when with you, Graydon," was the grave reply.

"Forgive me, Madge. I scarcely knew what I was doing. Let your thoughts take my part a little. Remember that within the hour I had believed I had lost you. I haven't had a chance to tell you yet, but when you passed under the train you appeared from where I was to dash into it, and I nearly dashed and fell out of my horse. Think what a horrible shock I had. I also was nervous and all broken up, the first time in my life that I remember being so. I couldn't cry as you did, and when my balance kissing you was as natural to me as—"

Madge's mouth had been twitching, and now, in spite of herself, her laugh broke forth.

"Please forgive me, Madge;" and he held out his hand.

"On condition that you will never do so again, or speak of it again."

"Never?" he repeated, ruefully.

"Never!" she said, with severe emphasis.

"I won't make any such promise," he replied, stubbornly.

"Oh, very well!" and she turned to the window.

"Confound it!" he thought; "I'm not going to tie myself up by any such pledge. I'm not sure of myself, or sure of anything, except that I'm a free man and that Madge won't be my sister. I shall remain free. She herself said I could take a straight course when once I got my bearings, and I shall permit no more promises or trammels till I do get them."

They passed speedily on to the end of their journey, and were the perfection of quiet, well-bred travellers, he disguising a slightly vexatious constraint and sense of unduly severe punishment, and she secretly exulting over the fact that he would not make the promise.

Madge soon found herself the object of no little curiosity and interest. The story of her mad ride had reached the house, and she was recognized by some who had been on the train; but Graydon met inquiries in such a way that they were not pushed very far. To a reporter he said, "Is this affair ours or the public's? We have not trespassed on any one's rights."

He reassured Madge by saying, "Don't worry about it; such things are only the talk of a day."

They selected a suite of rooms, and returned during the afternoon. Graydon's manner was courtesy itself, and but little more; but he was becoming a vigilant student of his companion, and she soon was dimly aware of the fact.

"I will understand her," he had resolved. "I intend to get my bearings, and then shape my course, for I cannot help feeling that the destiny of the little girl who used to sit on my lap, with her head on my shoulder, is in some way interwoven with mine. Even when I believed myself in love with another woman she had more power over me than Stella,—more power to kindle thought and awaken my deeper nature. I begin to think that all her talk about being a friend, good fellow, etc., is greater nonsense than my fraternal proposals. No friend, fellow, or sister could make my heart beat as it did to-day. I'll fathom the mystery of this sweet, peerless girl, if it takes all summer and all my life."

But the fair enigma at his side grew more inscrutable. Neither by tone or glance did she indicate that he was more to her than she had said.

"Do you wish to recognize the scenes we passed over this morning?" he asked, gently, as they approached them.

"No, not yet. I don't wish to think about it any more than I can help."

"Your wishes are mine."

"Occasionally, perhaps."

"You shall see."

"I usually do," was her laughing answer.

But she began to appear very weary, and when they reached the Under Cliff House she went to her room, and did not reappear again that day.

Graydon made even Dr. Sommers's ruddy cheek grow pale by his brief narrative, adding, "I wish you would tell Mrs. Muir the story, making as light of it as you can, and with her aid you can insure that Miss Alden obtains the rest and tonics she needs."

In youth, health, and sleep Madge found the best restoratives, and the morning saw her little the worse for the experiences of the previous day. The hours passed quickly in preparations for departure and in a call on Mr. and Mrs. Wendall, who gave evidence that they were becoming more resigned.

They were soon comfortably established in their new quarters, and late in the afternoon Madge was so rested that she took a short walk with Graydon. At last they entered the wonderful Palenville road, a triumph of practical engineering, and built by a plain mountaineer, who, from the base of the mountain to the summit, made his surveys and sloped his grades by the aid of his eye only.

They had been comparatively silent and Graydon finally remarked: "It gives me unalloyed pleasure, Madge, to look upon such scenes with you. There is no need of my pointing out anything. I feel that you see more than I do, and I understand better what I do see from the changing expression of your eyes. Don't you think such unspoken appreciation of the same thing is the basis of true companionship?"

"O Graydon, what an origina[illegible] thought!"

He bit his lip and remarked that the evening was growing cool.

At supper and during the evening his vigilance was not rewarded in the slightest degree. Madge appeared in good spirits, and talked charmingly even brilliantly at times, but she was exceedingly impersonal, and it was now his policy to follow her slightest lead in everything. He would prove that her wish was his, as far as it knew it.

The next morning Graydon went to the city, and would not return till Friday evening of the following week, for it was his purpose to resume business. In the evening he and his brother discussed their affairs, which were beginning to improve all along the line. Then their talk converged more upon topics connected with this story, and among them was Mr. Wildmere's supposition.

"His failures don't amount to very much," Henry remarked; "he has always done business in a hand-to-mouth way."

"I am surprised that Arnault permitted him to go down," Graydon said; "it couldn't have taken very much to keep him up."

"It is said that Arnault will have nothing to do with him, and that this fact has hastened his downfall."

"Well, so she played it too sharp on him, also. I was in hopes that she would marry and punish him. I don't wonder at his course, though; for if he has a spark of spirit he would not forgive her treatment after she learned that you had not failed. Oh, how blind I was!"

"Yes, Graydon, you are very blind," said Mr. Muir, inadvertently.

"Are? Why do you use the present tense?"

"Did I?" replied Mr. Muir, a little confusedly. "Well, you see, Madge and I understood Miss Wildmere from the first."

"Oh, hang Miss Wildmere! Do you think Madge—"

"Now stop right there, Graydon. I think Madge is the best and most sensible girl I ever knew, and that's all you will ever get out of me."

"Pardon me, Henry. I spoke from impulse, and not a worthy one, either. I tell you point blank, however, that Madge Alden hasn't her equal in the world. I would love her in a moment I dared. Would to Heaven I could have spent some time with her immediately after my return! In that case there would have been no Wildmere folly. I declare, Henry, when I thought she must be killed the other day I felt that the end of my own life had come. I can't tell you what that girl is to me; but with her knowledge of the past how can I approach her in decency?"

"Well," said Mr. Muir, shrugging his shoulders and rising to retire, "you are out of the worst part of your scrape, and Madge is alive and well. This is not a little to be thankful for. I shall combine my advice to business matters. Still, were I in your shoes, I know what I should do: 'Faint heart, you know. Good-night."

Graydon did not move, or scarcely answer, but, with every faculty of mind concentrated, he thought, "Henry's explanation of his use of the present tense does not explain, and there is more meaning in what he left unsaid in our recent interview than in what he said. Can it be possible? Let me take this heavenly theory and, as we were taught at college, see how much there is to support it. Was there any change in her manner toward me before we parted years since? Why, she was taken ill that night when she first met Miss Wildmere, and I stayed away from her so long—idiot!"

From that hour he went forward, scanning everything that had occurred between them, until he saw again her flushing face and startled eyes when he kissed her, and his belief grew strong that it was his immense good fortune to fulfil the prediction that Madge should be happy.

When he examined the attitude of his own heart toward her he was not surprised that his affection was growing into a love deeper and far more absorbing than Stella Wildmere had ever inspired.

"The old law of cause and effect," he said, smiling to himself, "and I can imagine no effect in me adequate to the cause. Even when she scarcely cast a shadow she was more companionable than Stella, but it never occurred to me to think of her in any other light than that of little sister Madge. Almost as soon as the thought occurred to me, and I had a right to love her, love became as natural as it was inevitable. Even in the height of my infatuation for Stella, Madge was winning me from her unconsciously to myself."

Such thoughts and convictions imparted a gentle and almost caressing tone to his words when Madge welcomed and accompanied him to his late supper on his return to the mountains.

This significant accent was more marked than ever when she promenaded with him for a brief time on the piazza. Nor did a little brusqueness on her part banish the tone and manner which were slight indeed, but unmistakable to her quick intuition.

"She is so proud and spirited," he thought, "that only when surprised and off her guard will she reveal to me a glimpse of the truth. I feel committed my own pride I didn't speak for a long time to come, not till she had ceased to associate me with Stella Wildmere; but if she is loving me as I believe she would love a man, she shall not doubt an hour longer than I can help, that I and my life's devotion are hers. Sweet Madge, you shall make your own terms again!"

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

"CERTAINLY I REFUSE YOU."

Having heard that one of the finest views among the mountains was to be had at Indian Head, a vast overhanging precipice facing toward the entrance to the Kaaterskill Clove, Graydon easily induced Madge to explore with him the tangled paths which led thither.

How his eyes exulted over her as she tripped on before him down the steep, winding, rocky paths! Once, however, he had a fright. She was taking a deep descent swiftly, when her skirt caught on a stubborn projecting stump of a sapling, and it appeared that she would fall headlong; but by some surprising, self-recovering power, which seemed exerted even in the act of falling, she lay before him in the path, almost as if reclining easily upon her elbow, and was nearly on her feet again before he could reach her side.

"Are you hurt?" he asked, most solicitously, brushing off the dust from her dress.

"Not in the least," she replied, laughing.

"Well," he exclaimed, "I don't believe you or any one else could do that so handsomely again if you tried a thousand times! Don't try, please. I carried you the other day some little distance, and found that you were no longer a little ghost."

"You carried me, Graydon? I thought the people from the farmhouse came."

"Oh, I didn't wait for them! I was half beside myself."

"Evidently," she replied, a little coolly.

Her tone made him falter in his purpose, and when at last they reached Indian Head, she was so resolutely impersonal in her talk, and had so much to say about the history and the legends of the region of which she had read, that he felt that she was in no mood for what he intended to say.

"That must be what is down on the map as Tamper Clove," said Madge; "and do you know, some think that it was up that valley Irving made poor Rip carry the heavy keg? Oh, I wish we could get down into it and go back that way!"

"Let me explore;" and he began swinging himself down by the aid of saplings and smaller growth. "Some one has passed here recently," he called back, "for trees are freshly blazed and branches broken. Yes," he cried, a moment later; "here is a well-defined path leading up the clove toward the hotel. Do you think you dare attempt it?"

"Certainly," she answered; and before he could reach her she was half way down the descent.

"Madge!" he cried, in alarm.

"Oh, don't worry," she said; "I was over worse places in the West."

"Well, what can's she do?" he exclaimed, as she stood beside him in the path.

"I can't give up my own way very easily," she replied. "You have found that out."

"That don't trouble me in the least. I don't wish you to give up your own way. It's warm down here, and our walk won't be so breezy as if we had followed the ridge."

"We will take it leisurely and have a rest by and by."

The gorge grew narrower and wilder. They passed an immense tree, under which Indians may have bivouacked, and in some storm long past the lightning had ploughed its way from the topmost branch to its gnarled roots.

At last the path crossed a little rill that tinkled with a faint murmur among the stones, making a limpid pool here and there. Immense boulders, draped with varied-hued mosses and lichens, were scattered about, where in ages past the melting glacier had left them. The trees that densely shaded the place seemed primeval in their age, loftiness, and shaggy garth.

"Oh, what a deliciously cool and lovely spot!" cried Madge, throwing down her alpenstock. "Get me some oak leaves, Graydon, and I will make you a cup and give you a drink."

In a moment she made a fairy chalice with the aid of little twigs, and when she handed it to him, dripping with water, his hand trembled as he took it.

"Why, Graydon," she exclaimed, "what on earth makes you so nervous?"

"I am not used to climbing, and I suppose my hand has a little tremor from fatigue."

"You poor thing! Here is a mossy rock on which you can imitate Rip. You have only to imagine that my leaf goblet is the goblin flagon of Irving's legend."

"Where and what would you be after twenty years?"

"Probably a wrinkled spinster at Santa Barbara."

"You wouldn't go away and leave me?"

"Certainly I would, if I couldn't wake you up."

He looked into her mirthful eyes and lovely face. Oh, how lovely it was, flushed with heat and climbing! "Madge," he said, impetuously, "you have waked me,—every faculty of my soul, every longing of my heart. Will you be my wife?"

Her face grew scarlet. She sprung to her feet, and asked, with half serious, half comic dismay, "Will I be your what?"

"I asked you to be my wife," he began, confusedly.

"O Graydon, this is worse than asking me to be your sister!" she replied, laughing. "Your alternations fairly make me dizzy."

"Truly Madge," he stammered, "a man can scarcely pay a woman a greater compliment—"

"Oh, it's a compliment!" she interrupted.

"No," he burst out, with more than his first impetuosity; "I'm in earnest. You, who almost read my thoughts, know that I am in earnest,—that—"

By a strong yet simple gesture she checked him.

"You scarcely realize what you are asking, Graydon," she said, gravely. "I have no doubt your present emotion is unforced and sincere, but is requires time to prove earnestness. You were equally sure you were in earnest a short time since, and I had little place, comparatively, in your thoughts."

"But I did not know you then as I do now."

"You thought you did. You had vivid impressions then about me, and more vivid about another woman. You are acting now under another impression, and from impulse. If I ever give myself away it shall not be in response to an impulse."

"Madge, you misjudge me—" he began, hotly.

"I think I know most of the facts, and you know how matter-of-fact I am. You may think I do not know what love is, but I do. It is a priceless thing. It is a woman's life, and all that makes a true woman's life. It is something that one cannot always give at will, or wisely; but if I had the power to give it at all, it should be to a man who had earned the right to ask it, and not to one who, within a few short days, had formed new impressions about me. Love is not the affection of a friend, or even of a sister. There is no necessity for me to marry."

"Then you refuse me?" he said, a little stiffly.

"Certainly I refuse you, Graydon. Has my manner led you to think that I was eager for a chance to accept you?"

"Oh, no, indeed! You have checked my slightest tendencies toward sentiment."

"Thank you for the assurance. I do not care the least for sentiment."

His airy fabric of hope, of almost certainty, had been shattered so suddenly that he was overwhelmed. There seemed but one conclusion.

"Madge," he said, in a low, hoarse voice, "answer me, yes or no. You loved some one at Santa Barbara who did not return your love? That is your trouble of which Mrs. Wendall spoke—I could not help hearing her words—that is the mystery about you which has been haunting me with increasing perplexity; that was the sorrow I heard in your voice the evening you sang in the chapel, and which has vaguely, yet strongly, moved me since? Tell me, is it not so? Tell me, as a friend, that I may be a truer friend."

She had turned away in a manner that confirmed his thought.

"You are suggesting a humiliating confession, Graydon."

"Yes, humiliating to the man who saw you, knew you, yet did not love you. Tell me, Madge, lest I make my own course clearer."

"Yes, then," she replied.

He sighed deeply, and was silent for a few moments.

"Madge," he at last resumed, "look at me. I wish to tell you something."

She turned slowly toward him, and he saw that her lip was trembling, and that tears were gathering in her eyes.

"You may think me cruel in wringing such a confession from you, but perhaps you will forgive me when you hear all I have to say. You may look upon me now as a creature of impulses and impressions. The memory of my recent infatuation is still fresh in your mind, but you yourself said I could be straightforward when once I got my bearings. I have them now, and I take my course. As a friend you have revealed to me much of your woman's nature, and, having known the best, I shall not look for anything less than yours. I shall be devoted to you through life. I will be to you all that I can be,—all that you will permit. It is said that time heals all wounds. Perhaps some day,—well, if it ever can be, I should be content to take what you could give. You said I was kind and patient with the little ghost. I should be far kinder and gentler—"

She had felt herself going fast, and had almost yielded to the impulse to exclaim, "You, Graydon, are the one who did not return my love; and although your love has been so brief and untested compared with mine, I will trust you;" when voices were heard on the same path by which they had come, and the figures of other ramblers were seen indistinctly through the foliage.

She gave his hand a strong pressure, seized her alpenstock, and hastened swiftly forward. The path soon afterward emerged on the public road. The breeze cooled her hot cheeks, kissed away her tears, and half an hour later they approached the hotel, chatting as quietly as the strictest conventionality would require.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

"MY TRUE FRIEND."

They found that Mr. Muir had arrived, and no family party in the long supper-room appeared more free from disturbing thoughts and memories than the one gathered at the banker's table. In Madge the keen-eyed man could detect nothing that was unusual, and in Graydon only a trace of the dignity and seriousness which would inevitably follow some deep experience or earnest purpose. They all spent the evening and the greater part of the following day together, and Madge was touched more than once by observing that Graydon sought unobtrusively to comply with even her imagined wishes and to enhance the point and interest of her spoken thoughts.

In answer to his direct question she had acknowled the absolute truth, and yet it had proved more misleading than all the disguises which her maidenly reserve had compelled her to adopt. It seemed now that she would have no further trouble with him,—that he had defined his purpose, and would abide by it. She was glad that she had yielded to his appeal and rewarded him in the first consciousness of his new regard for her. This feeling had seemed too recent, tumultuous, and full of impulse, and did not accord with her earnest, chastened spirit, that had attained the goal of its hope by such patient endeavor. She preferred that the first strong outflow from his heart should find wide, deep channels, and that his love for her should take the same recognized place in his life that her love had occupied so long in her own.

Yet she was exceedingly happy. The hope that had sustained her so long, that had been so nearly lost, now seemed certain of fulfilment, and no one but she and God knew how much this truth meant. Only He had been her confidant, and she felt that she had been sustained in her struggle from weakness to strength by a Power that was not human, and guided during the past weeks by a wisdom beyond her own.

"He has proved to me a good Father," was her simple belief. "He led me to do the best I could for myself, and then did the rest. I also am sure He would have sustained me if I had failed utterly. That my life would not have been vain and useless was shown when I saved little Nellie Wilder."

Thus it may be seen that she was quite unlike many good people. In her consciousness God was not a being to be worshipped decorously and then counted out from that which made her real life and hope.

The future now stretched away full of rest and glad assurance. Graydon's manner already began to fulfil his promise. He appeared by years an older and a graver man, and when he sat by her during the service in the wide parlor, there was not a trace of his old flippant irreverence. Whatever he now believed, he had attained the higher breeding which respects what is sacred to others.

She had but little compunction over his self-sacrificing mood. It was perfectly clear that by quiet, manly devotion he proposed to help "time heal the wound" made by that "idiot" at Santa Barbara, and she that she could gradually reveal to him so much improvement that equanimity and at last hope would find a place in his mind.

They parted Monday morning with a brief, strong pressure of hands, which Graydon felt conveyed volumes of sympathy and mutual understanding. She had said that he could write to her, and he found he had so much to say that he had to put a strong constraint upon himself.

Mr. Muir had watched them curiously during his stay in the mountains, and felt that something had occurred which he could not fathom. Graydon's manner at parting and since, during business hours, had confirmed this impression. He was almost as grave and reticent as the banker himself, and the latter began to chafe and grow irritable over the problem which he was bent on seeing solved in but one way. He looked askance and discontentedly at Graydon during dinner in the evening. When they were alone he was fidgety and rather curt in his remarks. At last he burst out, "Confound it! What has happened between you and Madge?"

"She had refused me, that's all," was the quiet reply.

Mr. Muir gave a low whistle.

"Oh, I understood you the other evening," resumed Graydon. "The phenomenal penetration on which you so pride yourself is at fault for once."

The banker was so nonplussed that he permitted his cigar to go out, but he soon reached the conclusion, "He has bungled." "Well," he asked at last, "What do you propose to do?"

"To be all that she will ever permit, and die a bachelor for her sake if I must."

Mr. Muir lighted his Havana again and puffed in silence for a while, then said, "I like that. Your purpose is clearly defined. In business and every thing else there is a solid comfort in knowing what you can depend upon."

Madge's replies to Graydon's letters were scarcely more than notes, but they were breezy little affairs, fragrant with the breath of the mountains, and had an excellent tonic effect in the hot city. They usually contained a description of what she had seen of some locality visited.

The days lengthened into weeks, Graydon coming every Friday afternoon, and wondering slightly at the demurely radiant face that greeted him. "Truly," he thought, "in the words of the old hymn she 'puts a cheerful courage on.'"

At times, however, she would be a little pensive. Then his tones would have a greater depth and gentleness, and his sympathy was very sweet, although she felt a little guilty because she was in no need of it. She could stifle her compunction by thinking:

"There was such a long, weary time when I did need it, and was desolate because of its absence, that I must have a little now to offset those gray, lonely days."

She had thought she had loved him before, but as she saw him patiently and unselfishly seeking to brighten her life in every possible way, with no better hope than that at some time in the indefinite future she might give him what was left of her heart after the old fire had died out, her former affection seemed as pale and shadowy as she was herself when first she learned that she had a woman's heart.

Late one Friday afternoon he startled her by asking abruptly, "Madge, what has become of that fellow out West?"

"Please don't speak about that again," she faltered.

"Oh well, certainly not, if you don't wish me to; but I thought if there was any chance—"

"Chance for what, Graydon?"

"Confound him! I don't suppose I could do anything. I want to make you happy, Madge. I feel just like taking the idiot by the ear, bringing him to you, and saying, 'There, you unconscionable fool, look at that girl—' You know what I mean. I'm suggesting the spirit, not the letter of my action. But, Madge, believe me, if I could help you at any cost to myself—"

"Is your regard for me, of which you spoke, so slight that you could go to work deliberately to bring that man to me?"

"There is no regard about it. My love for you is so great that I would do anything to make you happy."

"Madge," called the voice of Mrs. Muir, who was following them with her husband, "where are you and Graydon?"

"Here!" cried Madge, springing up. Then she gave her hand to him, and he saw that there were tears in her eyes. "Graydon," she said, "I couldn't ask a stronger test than that. I can't tell you how I appreciate it. I shall never impose any such task upon you."

"Don't hesitate on my account. I admit that it would be harder than one of the labors of Hercules, but you command me now and always. Nothing is so bad as to know that you are unhappy."

"Do I seem very unhappy?"

"No, you brave little woman! but who could guess the truth if you were? My knowledge is not derived from your usual manner."

"It is a pity if I cannot be patient when you set me so good an example," she said, as Mr. and Mrs. Muir approached.

TO BE CONTINUED.

The 49th Regiment of the British army has been ordered to Halifax, N. S. This regiment has a notch in Canadian history, which renders its return to an Atlantic station of more than passing moment. In 1812, the 49th participated in the battle of Queenston Heights, and witnessed the death of Gen. Brock. Later on, it held Fort George and subsequently a small detachment from its ranks held Beaver Dam against the United States troops, thus contributing in no small degree to the salvation of Burlington Heights, the loss of which would have been a serious thing for Canada.

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