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The Forest Republican

J. E. WENK. Office in Sinsbaugh & Co.'s Building. ELM STREET, TIONESTA, PA. TERMS, \$1.50 PER YEAR.

Vol. XIV. No. 52. TIONESTA, PA. WEDNESDAY, MARCH 22, 1882. \$1.50 Per Annum.

What Is Life?

Eyes opening to the light, a feeble cry; A few short years, some joys, more tears; Eyes closing into night; a quivering sigh; And this is life. Hands toiling, ne'er at rest, but more and more Eager for gain; oft tired in vain; Hands folded on the breast, the battle o'er; And this is life. Heart beating warm with love, a spirit brave; A dauntless breast, where weak may rest; Heart-silent, ne'er to move; a quiet grave; And this is life. A promise of rich harvests, sowing done; Bright hopes and trusts; but "Dust to dust Is murmured sadly o'er the setting sun; And this is life. A dawning fair and bright, a toil-filled day, Some passing showers that bring forth flowers At even-tide light—a heavenly ray; And this is life.

FOR LIFE.

Eleven days on the road. By no means the Union Pacific, or any other line of continuous travel, where the minimum of bounce and jerk is combined with the maximum of comfort possible under steady motion. A road still unknown to surveyor or engineer, beyond reach or thought of railroad-man or speculator, and but just opening up its two hundred miles or more of primeval forest. A road trodden only by Indians or crossed by stealthy fox or lynx, its length winding through trochocroen marsh and bog, and swift-stream and deep, unbroken forest, only a "blaze" here and there, indicating at some points the course to be followed, and where too obtrusive trees were cut away, the stumps left standing at just the right height for impaling wagon-bodies and stirring up a degree or two of profanity in the drivers.

From Pembina to Crow Wing, and in those two hundred miles of a loneliness only the traveler of that region can know, what had not the patient oxen undergone? Twelve miles the average day's accomplishment, until Leech Lake and some suggestion of a civilized road had been reached. Heavy rains, swollen streams, fathomless mud-holes. Often a morning was spent in hauling wagons across a turbid and turbulent little river, and while the oxen stood drenched and dripping after their reluctant swim to the other side, bringing over the loads, package by package, on a fallen tree, if such bridge could be discovered, or wading while the two half-breds swam across with them on their heads. Neddo, silent and calmly acquiescent in whatever fate might bring, served as fore and background for Boulanger, who swore in all dialects from French and English through to Creek and Chippewa, his black beads of eyes shooting fire, his small and gaily-bedecked legs dancing wildly among the packages, and his lean arms emphasizing the whirlwind of invective.

Even this had ceased to amuse. Drenched through by constant rains, tormented day and night by mosquitoes, in size, numbers and ferocity beyond the wildest imagination of the Eastern mind, endurance was all that remained. Even water-lilies palled, and for weary body and more weary mind but one desire had force—to see the low stockade of the Crow Wing agency, and an actual inn, where a real bed, even if one of four in a row, would be hailed as deliverance, and where one would find a postoffice and a daily stage, connecting this last outpost of civilization with St. Cloud, eighty miles below, and the first point where railroads could be reached.

Again a broken bridge gave another morning of unloading and swearing and reloading, and when at last the rushing river was passed and the wagon once more under way, a treacherous and shelving mud-hole suddenly swallowed up oxen and fore-wheels, dumped load and owners into its very depths, and for five minutes seemed likely to hold them there. Then all struggled out together, and while Boulanger shrieked with rage and Neddo examined pole and wheels and fished out the provision-baskets, putting the contents on a damp log to dry, patience at last took flight, and like the ancient prophet in one of his very many trials and predicaments, "I spake with my tongue; and I opened wide my mouth."

"I will not stay in this nest of mosquitoes and flies and wait hours for this final catastrophe to unswear. I shall march on to Gulf Lake, where there is a beach, unless this last flood has turned it to water, and there I can sit in the sand and get dry. Of course, now there is no reaching Crow Wing to-night, and we must make our camp at the lake."

For this journey was by no means a first or second one, and the ox-team was simply one more experience of frontier traveling. Canoe and flat-train and Indian pony had all been tried, and neither was better than this frightful crawl, inch by inch, as it were. At Gulf Lake, the first camping-point the previous year, ten miles above Crow Wing, had been a solitary wigwam, tenanted by a toothless but amiable squaw, who gave me fresh pickerel roasted in the scales over her fire, and affording a new sense of what flavor and savor natural methods may hold, and potatoes hardly bigger than walnuts, but dug in my honor from the field she had planted. Perhaps she would be there to-day, in any case, alone or with such society as she could give, there waited

for me the clear, still, blue water in its setting of silvery sand, the blasted pine with its eagle's nest, the hush and serenity of the silent forest. Five miles under the pines, where one was less tormented by mosquitoes, and then came a final one—a wade rather than a walk. I had forgotten the bog and the corduroy had sunk quite out of sight, though I could feel it now and then below the black mud which held tenaciously to each foot by turn and yielded with a long, slow suck, like a smack of evil satisfaction over my tribulations. Ten thousand hands could not have availed against that gray column of mosquitoes, whose sound seemed at last a trumpet call to other columns, and which, in spite of headgear and leather gloves, penetrated the unknown and unguarded chink or crevice.

Through the swamp at last and out once more under the friendly pines, and I ran, knowing the goal was near, and seeing soon the flashing sunlight on the blue water. There was a bending figure near the lake. Along the brook emptying into it corn and peas and beans were growing, and, actually, balsams and even sweet-peas at the end!

"My squaw has been brought over to white man's fashions," I say half aloud, and then stopped short, as the figure sprang up and turned with a subdued "my gracious!" when she saw the mud-coated and caked, torn, and most disreputable-looking apparition before her. So was a face, such watery and faded, yet somehow intense blue eyes, so infinitesimal a nub of hair, so shadowy yet resolute a writh, I had never yet encountered, even in remotest and most unfrequented cabin, where a woman's life means the speedy loss of every trace of comeliness and grace.

"Well, I call it a providence!" she said, coming forward with a sort of silent rush as if carried by the wind. "The first day I've ever been lonesome a mite or thought to care, but he's gone below three days now, an' Shahweah off or berries, an' I did say jest now, be the pond there, it was a leetle lonesome. An' then to think of a white woman bein' what I should see! It does beat all! Where be you from? I reckon it's a dry country you've left behind you," she added with a twinkle, "for you have brought all the mud with you. Now you come straight up along with me, an' I'll scrape you off some. Where's your folks?"

"Six miles back in a mud-hole," I answered, with the ghostly impression still strong upon me. The voice was only a husky whisper, and a nearer view only intensified the bloodlessness of the skin hardly hiding the poor bones below. The woman laughed. "You think I'm a poor show," she said. "Folks gin'y do; but I'm health itself to what I was." "You were not here when I went up a year ago?"

"No; I come in November. When you're in some of my clothes an' have had a cup of tea I'll tell you all about it. There's the house. Aint that pretty for Gulf Lake? Kinder comfortable?" Comfortable! A palace could not have held a tenth of all the word meant! A "but and a ben" only, but how spotlessly neat! Morning-glories and hops climbing over door and window, where white curtains hung; a snow-white bed, shut in by mosquito-bar; a square of rag carpet on the floor; stove and tins polished to their utmost capacity—one of shining blackness, the other of shining brightness—a dresser holding civilized dishes; a shelf, where two or three books lay—the Bible, Whittier's poems and "David Copperfield," and a pile of well-worn papers; an old-fashioned rocking-chair with patch-work cushions, and "light stand" near it; and, to complete the curious mixture of old New England farmhouse and frontier-cabin, a warming-pan hanging between the windows, its copper face shining like everything else.

"You think that's a queer thing to tote out West?" said my hostess, who had already spread a cloth and put on fresh water to boil for the promised cup of tea. "I lotted on it before I was big enough to reach it, hangin' there in grandmother's kitchen up in Vermont, an' when I went forty years ago—to Pennsylvania—I took it along for old times, and then to Illinois an' Minnesota an' here we both are up here. You'd say it wasn't much more use than Timothy Dexter's ship-load for the West Indies; but he made a fortune out o' that, an' I sort of expect good luck from this one. Now, before that kettle boils, you might freshen up a mite. The heat of it we won't do nothin' to till you've had your tea."

Words can never tell the delight of that freshening—first in cold water in a real wash-basin, then the tea, drank to an accompaniment of narrative poured out as if mere speech were a gift straight from heaven. An indomitable cheerfulness, a resolute grasp of these shadowy threads of life, seemed the strongest characteristic of this creature in whose faded eyes quick gleams of expression came and went, and whose alertness and even vivacity were miraculous testimonies to the imperious will that governed the frail body, no matter what human weakness interposed.

"I hankered after home; I do it even now, once in a great while," the shadowy woman went on; "but I ain't goin' to dwell on that. Likely's not, you've heard forty folks say the same thing. But what you hain't heard I'm goin' to tell you now. He came from Maine, as maybe, I don't say—born a lumberman, an' his father one before him. An' so, when Minnesota opened up, it come easy to put out o' Illinois, where farmin' never suited him, an' where there wasn't a stick o' timber, except along the river-bottoms, an' he always half pinin' for it. He knows his business an' soon fell into work, an' we settled down in Minneapolis; that's about as folks a place as you'll find. But you see I wasn't never over strong, an' I'd shook in them bottoms till it's my belief there wasn't an inch inside of me that kept jest the place the Lord had laid out to have it keep. Folks said the trouble was your gall ran out into your liver; but I said your liver ran where it was a mind to, an' your stomach into whatever else there was, an' morn'n likely interfered with your lungs an' kept you from having a long breath. That's the way it looked to me, even after I got settled in Minneapolis, for mine got shorter an' shorter, an' at last, in spite of me, I was in bed, an' the folks sayin' I shouldn't never see spring."

"Now, the children had died as fast as they come almost. There wasn't one left; an' Hiram is set by natur' on what's his own, an' it seemed as if he couldn't stand it to lose me, too. We'd been unlucky, too—burned out once an' the bank broke that had our money in it, such as it was—an' he was pretty low; an' when time come to go up to camp he half broke down, an' he said: 'Malviny, I can't. Supposin' you shouldn't be here when I come back. I had better go as hand in a mill, an' earn less.'"

"Hiram, I said, 'you take me along with you. You never saw a man look more scared, for he thought I was goin' out o' my mind. But I hadn't noticed folks an' ways for nothin,' an' I said: 'Don't you know jest as well as the next one that the doctors keep sendin' consumptive folks up into the pineries; an' if your camp ain't as good as another, I'd like to know. I can't more'n die, anyway; an' I'm sick of bein' tucked up in bed an' an air-tight chokin' me day an' night, an' I'm goin' with you.' 'Malviny, you can't,' he said, 'it's all men. There ain't no place.' 'Then make a place,' says I. 'Tain't fit,' says he. 'Women don't know anything about a passel of men together.' 'Then the more reason for findin' out,' seein' if they can't be made decent,' says I, 'if that's what you mean. I feel to know I shan't die if I can git up there; but go I will, if I have to walk an' can't do more'n ten steps a day.' 'Well, he knew I was set, an', though I didn't put my foot down very often, I had it down then, square, an' he set in a brown study awhile, an' he says: 'Well, Malviny, tain't no time to cross you, an' I never wanted to yet. If you think you'll hold out, I'll start up the country to-morrow an' see about havin' a separate cabin next to camp. They're fixin' for winter now, an' I kin go an' come in a week. But I don't see how you'll stand it, an' I don't believe you will.' 'Then I can be buried in the woods,' says I. 'I always did have a hankerin' to lay down for good under pine trees.'"

"Well, he went off; an' I will say I didn't see myself how I could live till he got back, for I had another time of raisin' blood that very night. It came pourin' straight out; but I said: 'I won't give in. It can't all run out, an' I calculate there'll be enough left to keep me goin'.' "Folks wouldn't believe it, but by the time Hiram got back I could crawl to the window. I set there when he came in sight, an' he was astonished as you'd want to see. But he had to lay in an' git picked for goin' up, an' the very morning all was ready I must needs come down again. Well, he waited a day, an' then he says: 'I'll go with the load, Malviny, an' fix up a bit, an' then I'll come back an' take you up on an empty sled, so's to make room for a bed an' things for you to go easier.' 'I want to go now,' I says; 'I shall be dead if I don't.' Well we argued some back an' forth, an' at last he says: 'It ain't no use, Malviny. All's ready now, an' I'm goin' now, an' I'll come back for you as I said; an' off he started for the barn. I was up that minute an' into my warm things in spite of Mrs. Smith tryin' to stop me, an' when he drove round an' come in I jest walked to the door. 'No, you don't,' he says, an' jest took me up an' laid me on the bed an' run."

"What got into me then I couldn't tell; Lord carried me along, I reckon. Anyway, I run too, Mrs. Smith after me, an' Hiram jest drivin' off, an' there I stuck to the runner and wouldn't let go. Hiram was pale as a ghost, an' 'most cryin', an' he says, 'For the Lord's sake, go back, Malviny,' an' I says, 'For the Lord's sake I won't,' an' jest crawled up into the buffaloes alongside o' him. 'There's one chance in a million of your gettin' there alive,' he says, 'an', if you're bound to go on that one, we'll try it, that's all,' an' off we went."

"Well, whether 'twas the notion of the air away from the air-tight, or carryin' the p'int, I couldn't tell, but I grew more an' more chirp with every mile. I eat quite a dinner, an' sleep all night, an' Hiram he jest kept still an' waited. I knew he was waitin'. But we got through at last, an' into these very pine woods beginnin' at Crow Wing. I sniffed 'em, an' knew life was in 'em if

it was anywhere. When Hiram drove up before the camp, an' Smith, the overseer, come out, he looked a minute, an' then swore right out: 'Be you turnin' into a blamed fool at your time o' life, to be bringin' a dead woman into camp?' he says. But I knew I wasn't anywhere near dyin', an' Smith knows it too, now. I'd give a sight if he wasn't below. He's so contented to have me round again, he says he don't care if we never stir from here the rest of our lives; an' I'm sure I don't an' wouldn't. I walk under them pines, an' small 'em deep in an' I says, 'Here's your life-elixir, an' no mistake,' an' if folks knew it they wouldn't die in little close rooms, but come out under 'em. I was always a master-hand for out-doors, an' he helps along the house-work, so't we can garden together, an' Shahweah does what he an' me ain't a mind to. Mostly as long as daylight lasts I putter round outside; an' I ain't sure but what I shall be an old woman yet, even if I hain't but a piece of a lung left."

"As for them men, you never see twenty fellows more set on bein' agreeable than they was. For all havin' to whisper, I always managed to make 'em hear, an' I did odds an' ends for 'em, an' they went in an' out, an' told stories, an' sung, an' one night I even danced; an' I never had a more sociable winter. I thought he'd be a leetle lonesome when they went below; but he takes a sight of comfort in the paper—we've had it from the beginnin'—an' he don't seem to mind one mite. I always read considerable, an' I go over an' over the few books we've got, an' find somethin' new every time. And I expect you'll laugh when I tell you the only thing that ever makes me lonesome or skeery. 'Tain't Injins; I don't see but what they're folks enough, when you git over their blankets. It's loons. I say they're the lonesomest thing in natur', an' when they holler I jest crawl all over. But then I can git along even with them. An' now I'd like to know how you come here, an' all about it, every word; but I'm dreadful sorry he ain't to home."—Helen Campbell, in Lippincott.

Sad Career of a Baron's Daughter.

The recent death of Mme. Laura Sweitzer, at Port Jervis, N. Y., recalls one of the saddest and most remarkable careers ever recorded. The story of her life, as told by Mme. Sweitzer, reads like a romance and seems almost too strange to be true. Laura Von Puffnitz Steinburg, daughter of Baron Frederick Otto Von Puffnitz Steinburg, was born at Wismar, in Mecklenburg, Germany, on the 10th of October, 1819. Her father was of an ancient and highly-honored family, and Laura was a younger daughter. She was given all the advantages of an expensive education in music and the German language.

At sixteen years of age she met a very poor young nobleman with a very long and honorable name, the Count Frederick Kolstedt Schleswick Sweitzer. The young man was handsome and pretty well educated, but his poverty was a bar to their union. Laura felt that she loved him so deeply that she could marry no one but him. Her old father would not listen to her entreaties, and finally he sent her to Altona, a town near Hamburg, on the Elbe river, where he placed her in a convent until she became cured of her passion. She contrived to let her lover know where she was, and thither he followed her. Having no money he applied for and obtained a position as under-gardener in the convent at a modest compensation. He and Laura were thus enabled to meet daily, and affairs were going on swimmingly when the old Baron Steinburg, having found that Sweitzer had left Wismar, suspected the true state of affairs, and came posthaste to Altona. He arrived in time to catch his daughter in an arbor in the convent garden conversing with the forbidden lover. The old baron and the young man exchanged hard words, and a duel, in which the baron was severely wounded, resulted. Young Sweitzer and his sweetheart fled from Altona, were married, and came to America, where they landed at Castle Garden, New York, almost penniless. Sweitzer obtained employment and they lived comfortably several years. Finally his health failed, and the couple came to Port Jervis, N. Y., and took up their abode in a little shanty in a suburb. Madame Sweitzer made enough money to keep them alive by peddling matches and notions among the farmers, and by begging during the winter. She frequently walked fifty miles a day, and on a recent occasion took part in a pedestrian contest in Port Jervis, where she made a record of ninety-eight miles in twenty-three hours, and earned considerable money. During her begging excursions she told the above story of her life. She was known in Pike county as "Meeshy Maunie" or "the Countess." Her death was horrible. She was trying to steal a ride on the night freight train to Middletown, thirty-four miles south of Port Jervis, when she fell under the engine and was so crushed that her body was scarcely recognizable. Her husband died a few years ago.

Ingersoll's Position Sound.

In his recent lecture in New York city Bob Burdette, the Burlington (Iowa) journalist, made a sensation by his allusions to Bob Ingersoll. The latter's success, Burdette thought, was owing to his overwhelming humor, which made his audience laugh at their own dearest creeds. "And I believe," continued Mr. Burdette, seriously, while his audience was hushed—"I believe Colonel Ingersoll's position is sound." There was a moment's hesitation, and all the tittering stopped. "I know," continued the speaker, "it isn't the thing to say in this hall and to this audience; but I have said it, and won't go back on anything I have said." It appeared for a moment that Mr. Burdette's candor had got the better of his discretion. He continued: "But that is the trouble with Ingersoll, it is all sound, like a bass drum, and no sense." Then a good orthodox roar went up, and everybody felt relieved.

The Panama Canal.

Should the projected canals across the Isthmus of Panama ever be completed, it will be at a terrible cost of human life. The climate is very unhealthy, and laborers cannot be provided with proper food.—Dr. Poole's Health Monthly.

General Budlong A. Morton, alias Thomas A. Marvin, the celebrated swindler and bigamist, has earned a term of solitary confinement by an attempt to break out of the Virginia penitentiary.

How Rugs Are Made.

How many who stop to admire the show windows of our carpet dealers know how the rug is made? That it is woven somehow is all that is apparent as it lies there warm, soft, bright with a dozen colors, fruits, birds or figures. The rug's twice woven, and this is its history: First, the border and center that is to form the pattern is designed; then painted in straight lines upon paper, containing a ruled scale, and in the proper colors that are afterward to appear on the rug. This paper rug is then cut up into strips, each containing two spaces of the scale, and these papers are the pattern that the first or weft weaver is to follow.

In weaving weft a warp beam of say 200 threads in width and a weep beam of 100 threads in width are required. Two threads of the first and one of the second pass through the same split in the reed at regular intervals of say one-third of an inch, the intervening splits of the reed being empty. The paper pattern is fastened to the middle of the work, and the weaver follows it exactly as it is painted; that is, the pattern may need six threads of crimson, two of black, twelve of eorn, ten of green olive, and so on, the weaver filling the "spot" exactly as to length and color. Having woven the full length of the paper as painted on the left-hand space the paper is begun again and the painting in the right-hand space is followed, and when all the papers which, laid side by side, form the rug, have been thus gone over the weft for the rug is finished.

The roll of weft-cloth is then run through the cutting machine, a ten-inch cylinder, around which a continuous thread of knife blades is wound. The cylinder is revolved at a high rate of speed, and the weft-cloth, passing within range of the knives, is cut into strips by them. These strips do not unravel, because in weaving the weft-thread is twisted about the two warp-threads and the filling is locked in. After twisting each strip to change it from being a flat thread into a round thread, it is wound upon a bobbin, and is ready for the second weaver, who is called the setter.

The warp of the rug is black flax; and the setter uses two shuttles, alternately—a small one, containing a bobbin of two-ply or three-ply flax, and a large one for the unwieldy bobbin of weft. A white thread on each side, and one in the middle of the black wrap are the guides to the setter, who sees that certain parts of the weft-thread come under those white threads before he presses the weft in. Each bobbin of weft will weave about three inches of the rug; so, if the rug is one yard long it will require about twelve bobbins, which mean twelve pieces of weft-cloth to complete it. But these twelve pieces, having each been cut up into ninety-six identical strips, will make ninety-six similar rugs. Therefore should the weft weaver put in, say, eight threads (one-half inch in length) of a wrong color or shade, that error would appear in ninety-six rugs. The setter having finished the ninety-six sets of twelve bobbins, the rugs are ready for finishing. The machine through which they pass turns the surface off evenly, and brushes them free of fragments of the materials used. This treatment brings out every detail of the design and heightens the colors. Most of the rugs made here are of flax and wool; others are of silk and shoddy silk. The weft for the silk rugs has eight strips to the inch, and to cut it requires 288 knife blades, each one of which must have a razor edge. The weft cloth and the blades must be set to a nicety, since the variation of the sixteenth of an inch would make the knives cut the 288 threads instead of the filling between the threads. There is a firm in Glasgow, Scotland, who manufacture for the royal houses of Europe such elaborate designs as the Lord's supper, the weft-weaver, in some cases, using 400 different shuttles.

A Relic of Guiteau.

A relic at once of Guiteau and of the great Chicago fire has been found in an old safe, which was being rummaged over by Snyder & Co. Upon a faded sheet of note paper was written the following:

May 12, 1870.—Received of Messrs. Snyder & Co. One judgment note vs. Ernest Boas, \$35. One note vs. L. S. Warner, \$25. One judgment note vs. Jacob Foreyth, \$300. One note vs. McGuoguel, Straus & Co., \$316.70. One judgment note vs. Louise Free—\$200. (Signed) No. 2 Methodist Ch.—J. C. Walters. Mr. Snyder says that a LIVERY STABLE a good reputation as a "Clarkish Co.," and am practicing these notes vs. a traveler with first-class he sustained \$1 from all trains at the P. E. & C. being a portion of road, making connections at Tyover a Strasburg Station. JOHN WALTER. Tylosburg, Pa. March 1st, 1882.

Broken Strings.

There is no minstrel ripe in years, But, as his song he sings, Feels musingly across his harp To find some broken strings. The early songs that from his lyre His youthful fingers flung, Have lost their first Promethean fire Since love and life were young. The world may listen to the strains Which from each harp-string float; But still into his ear remains A discord in the note. And still his heart, unsatisfied, Seeks, yearningly, in vain, To find the music which has died And mend the broken strain. Oh, world! that listens, when too late, Unto the voice which sings, And loves the music, when the years Have shattered many strings, But little owes the bard to you For praises from your tongue, Who heard not when the harp was new, And love and life were young.

HUMOR OF THE DAY.

"I am not so bad as I am painted," said the fashionable woman. The bashful lover who can't express his feelings often sends them by mail. Though manufactured abroad, a home-spun article—a top.—Richmond Baton. "If I thought I was going to become gray, I know I should die!" exclaimed Miss Springle. When she turned gray, she did dye, sure enough.—Boston Transcript. A certain doctor of divinity said every blade of grass was a sermon. The next day he was amusing himself by clipping his lawn when a parishioner said: "That's right, doctor—cut your sermons short."

A lesson in language: "So your daughter has married a rich husband?" "Well," slowly replied the father, "I believe she has married a rich man, but I understand he is a very poor husband."—Hartford. Student (not very clear as to his lesson)—"That's what the author says, any way." Professor—"I don't want the author; I want you!" Student (despairingly)—"Well, you've got me."—Harvard Crimson. "Johnnie, here you are at the breakfast table and your face is unwashed." "Well," slowly replied the father, "I believe she has married a rich man, but I understand he is a very poor husband."—Hartford. Student (not very clear as to his lesson)—"That's what the author says, any way." Professor—"I don't want the author; I want you!" Student (despairingly)—"Well, you've got me."—Harvard Crimson. "Johnnie, here you are at the breakfast table and your face is unwashed." "Well," slowly replied the father, "I believe she has married a rich man, but I understand he is a very poor husband."—Hartford. 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