

Raffsman's Journal.

BY S. B. ROW.

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BETTER LATE THAN NEVER.

Life is a race where some succeed,
While others are beginning;
'Tis luck at times, at others speed,
That gives an early winning;
But if you chance to fall behind,
Ne'er slacken your endeavor,
But keep this wholesome truth in mind,
'Tis better late than never.

If you can keep ahead, 'tis well;
But never trip your neighbor;
'Tis noble when you can excel
By honest, patient labor;
But if you are outstripped at last,
Press on as bold as ever;
Remember, though you are surpassed,
'Tis better late than never.

Ne'er labor for an idle boast
Of victory o'er another;
But while you strive your utmost,
Deal fairly with a brother.
What'er your station, do your best,
And hold your purpose ever,
And if you fail to beat the rest,
'Tis better late than never.

Choose well the path in which you run,
Succeed by noble daring;
Then, tho' the last, when none 'tis won,
Your crown is worth the wearing.
Then never fret if left behind,
Nor slacken your endeavor,
But ever keep this truth in mind--
'Tis better late than never.

JOE CHICKWEED'S COURTSHIP.

AND HOW HE WAS CUT OUT.

"I vow!" said Joe Chickweed, as he stood before the parlor mirror, putting the last touch to his well-oiled hair, "if I let the night pass without finding out just how I stand with Melinda Martin, then I'm a cow. The critter's always acted so pesky skittish that there's been no getting around her. I like her, and she knows it, and I'm inclined to think she likes me; but she likes more than one string to her bow, and I ain't sure but she'd skip me any minute if she could make a better bargain. Maybe I'm doing her an injustice, and I hope I am; but she acts sometimes 'tarnally like a real coquette, and I don't know what to make of her. But to-night," he added, sitting an immensely high and an immensely wide brimmed hat upon his shining head, "to-night I'll settle the matter—I'll cross the Rubicon, if I get my boots full of water. Melinda ain't a bad spec, and I might do worse most anywhere else."

"Do tell if it's come to that!" exclaimed old Mrs. Chickweed, who had entered the room, unnoticed by her son, in time to hear his last sentence—"well, I've all along had a notion that you was aimin' in that 'ere direction."

Joe turned red from his eye-winkers to his ankles, and looked very sheepish. He worked very busily, too, for a few seconds, with brushing some imaginary dust from a place between the shoulders of his coat, which he couldn't reach, but he said nothing.

"There ain't nothin' to be ashamed of Joe," continued the loquacious old lady, apparently greatly pleased at making the discovery she had; "and you spoke gospel truth when you said you might do worse elsewhere. Melinda's a well-gal."

"Well," said Joe, gaining some courage from his mother's manner, "I'm glad you think so, for I'm bound to make her my wife, if—"

"If what?" asked the old lady.

"Well, if everything's favorable."

"Don't you fear anything's agin it? You just do your duty, Joe, and Melinda's yours. Remember the farm."

"It is a fine farm—no mistake!" said the young man, earnestly.

"No better farm of its size in the whole county than the Widder Martin's!" said Mrs. Chickweed, in an emphatic tone.

"No, I think not."

"And then see how it is stocked: two yoke of the best steers in all these parts, besides her two horses, sayin' nothin' of the rest of the critters. And, of course, they'll all go with Melinda when the Widder's dead, and before, too; for you will go right onto the farm as soon as you marry, and take charge of everything."

"It's a good opening, that's a fact," said Joe; "but I put a higher value on Melinda than on all the property."

"And well you should; though the farm and fixin's ain't to be despised."

"Oh, I ain't one to despise 'em."

Joe laughed and left the room, and soon after he left the house, and made his way as expeditiously as the gloom of evening would permit toward the residence of the Widder Martin. A light was burning in the front room, but the window curtains were closely drawn, so that he could not get a view into the apartment as he passed along the yard. He knocked at the door, and was admitted by the widow in person, who, after inquiring benevolently after his health, ushered him into the parlor.

It was already occupied by two persons—Melinda and Reuben Sparks, the latter a young man who had recently returned to Sprigville from California, and who was looked upon with special disfavor by the young farmer.

Joe was welcomed by the young lady, but not so cordially as formerly, and by no means so cordially as Joe thought his due. He was greeted by Mr. Sparks in a sort of joking, condescending way that raised his ire inwardly. However, the conversation that followed was apparently agreeable to all parties, and the evening wore away till the widow retired, when Mr. Sparks intimated that it was perhaps time for him to be returning, as it was quite a little walk to the village. Melinda at once asserted that it was very early indeed,

and he should not think of leaving so soon; whereupon Mr. Sparks was induced to remain a while longer, and Mr. Chickweed was secretly enraged that Melinda should be so taken up with the company of the young sprig.

California became the topic of conversation, and Reuben Sparks shone brilliantly in his descriptive accounts of the country, and what he had done there.

"Then you weren't in the diggin'?" inquired Joe, in response to something his rival had uttered.

"By no means," replied Sparks, loftily. "I left diggin' to those that were used to it; I hadn't a taste that way."

"Oh, then you stopped in town?"

"Certainly."

"Business, I s'pose, first rate there?"

"Yes. A young man of talent will soon engage himself in profitable employment."

"Then I s'pect you must have done extraordinary well!" said Joe, in a tone he intended should be sarcastic.

"Oh!" replied the other, laughing in a meaning way, and winking with one eye at the young lady—who appeared to "take," and enjoyed it accordingly—"as for that matter, I can't complain. I think I improved my chances—I rather think I did. No, I don't complain, by no means."

"Then why didn't you stay longer? You weren't gone but a short time; you should have staid a year or two more, and made yourself independent."

"Perhaps I am independent already; I say, perhaps. Of course, I can't tell you the exact amount I made—that, I think, is quite unnecessary."

"Oh, quite."

"And perhaps, too, there were attractions in this part of the world as alluring as California gold."

He looked knowingly at Melinda as he spoke, and gave her another wink, which that young lady seemed to relish, though she blushed, and appeared wonderfully embarrassed for a moment.

Joe noticed what occurred, and didn't at all fancy the course affairs seemed to be setting. He knew that he should feel and appear peculiarly savage, if he remained much longer; and so he hinted that it was about time for him to be going; and what served to enrage him more than aught else, Melinda appeared to be of the same mind, for she offered no objection. So he took his hat and departed, with firmness in his step and bitterness in his heart.

"I don't like the looks of things at all," he muttered to himself, as he walked on through the dark; "she's altogether too tender with that chap to be agreeable to me. If he has not turned her head, then there's a mistake somewhere. I don't believe he has brought enough money from California to buy a rope to hang him. He's after the Widder's farm, now, to make it up, I'll bet my hat. Yes, sir, he means to catch Melinda; and I've been fool enough to wait till this time before coming to a final point. But perhaps it ain't too late yet?" He added, after a few moments' reflection; "maybe she'll consent to have me yet, if I lose no time in asking her. I'll try it; I vow I will. I'll go over again to-morrow, and have the thing settled."

And having come to this conclusion, he hurried forward, and soon after was dreaming of Melinda Martin, the widow, himself, and an infinite number of Reuben Sparks, who were all endeavoring to chase him up a steep hill, and beat his brains out with bars of California gold.

Mrs. Chickweed was most anxious next morning to learn from her son the result of his mission to the widow's, but Joe was silent and pensive, avoiding his mother's eye, and keeping away from the house as much as possible. Late in the evening he carefully dressed himself in his best suit, and with a look of determination stamped upon his features, he once more set out to visit the fickle Melinda.

He found her at home and alone.

"Hope you spent an agreeable evening yesterday," remarked Joe, after he had passed the usual compliments, and seated himself near the young lady.

"Oh, yes, I did, I assure you," was the reply.

"Mr. Sparks, I should say is a very entertaining young man?"

Joe didn't think, anything of the kind, but quite the contrary.

"He is, indeed," responded Melinda.

Joe looked anything but pleased at this encomium on his rival, and sat for some moments in utter silence. At length he turned to the young lady and spoke:

"I came here last evening," he said, "with the intention of speaking to you on a particular subject, but I found you so engaged that I determined to call again to-night, and so—"

"Here you are," said Melinda, smiling at his embarrassment.

"Yes, here I am. And, now that I'm here, I'll tell you at once what I have come for. You know I love you; I've told you as much more'n once, and I've flattered myself that I weren't indifferent to you. But now I wish you to tell me if you really love me in return, and if I may hope to make you my wife.—Will you marry me?"

Joe, having arrived at this important question, looked tenderly and appealingly into her face, and breathlessly awaited her reply. She colored slightly, and bent her eyes to the ground.

"You are quite right," she said, "in supposing that you are not indifferent to me, for I regard you very highly."

"Then all my fears have been groundless?" uttered Joe, exultingly.

"But," continued the lady, "I cannot very well grant your wish regarding—"

"What?" cried Joe, his countenance suddenly changing.

"I cannot very well marry you!"

"And why can't you? I'd like to know what's to hinder you marrying me if you think enough of me?"

"There is one reason in particular."

"What is it?"

"I'm engaged to another!"

Joe turned pale.

"Sparks!" he cried—"tell me, is it Sparks?"

"Well! and if it is."

"I knew it! Blast him, I knew what he was after!"

"I don't know that Mr. Sparks has acted in any way as he should not!" remarked the young lady, warmly.

"He's a cheatin' villain!" replied Joe, indignantly.

"You don't know him; he's nothing of the kind!"

"It's you that don't know him; but you will before long. I've been deceived, and I ain't afraid to say so!" continued he, snatching up his hat; "it's the money he pretends to have that's lost me a wife; but when you want to touch it, just as like as not you won't be able."

He rushed from the house as he uttered these words, and hurried homeward. He found his mother still up, and was eagerly interrogated by her as to the luck he had met with. He told her all, and little could she do but enable to offer him in return.

For two or three days following, Joe Chickweed said very little, but he thought much. One morning he met his mother with a smiling face and a sort of triumph in his look. The old lady was somewhat surprised at this sudden change in her son's manner.

"Why, what on airth's the matter now, Joe?" said she; "hope you ain't goin' to go crazy."

"Not by a long shot," replied Joe; "I ain't quite so big a fool as that."

"Then what ails you?"

"Oh, I've got it all arranged at last—I've got 'em now."

"Who? What?"

"Why, Melinda and that vagabond Reuben Sparks—hat! ha!—I'll surprise him."

"Well, how are you goin' to do it?"

"Oh, it's all right!" said Joe, laughing slyly—"I'll do it, darn'd if I don't. I'll fix the sneakin' critter!"

"But how—how, Joe? Can't you speak out? What's got into the boy?" cried the old lady, dying with curiosity to know what was his plan.

"Well, now, I'll tell you all about it," began Joe, assuming a more sober tone.

"Well, I just wish you would."

"You know the widder has always favored my keepin' company with Melinda."

"Well?"

"I do I do believe she's desp'rate down on that fellow, Sparks, coming into her family."

"Yes!"

"In that case she wouldn't very willingly let her property go into his hands."

"But, 'cordin' to the will of old Mr. Martin, the property ain't to go out of her hands till she's dead."

"Just so—but Sparks would have all the benefit. And now I'm coming to the point—it's just there I'm going to foil Reub Sparks!"

"Well, do let me hear!"

"The widder Martin herself ain't a bad looking woman?" Joe remarked, in a sort of a mysterious tone of voice, glancing up suddenly into his mother's face.

"No—but what's that got to do with the matter?" replied the old lady, impatiently.

"And she ain't very old, neither," continued he, with the same air.

"Why, she can't be more'n forty."

"So I should think; and she has a good chance of living forty more."

"Well, and what of it?"

"Just this," said Joe, leaning over to reach his mother's ear—"I'll marry the widder!"

Mrs. Chickweed, expecting, as she was, something startling, wasn't prepared for this. She uttered an exclamation of unbounded surprise, started upward from her seat, and then sank back and fixed her eyes with a vacant stare upon her son's face.

"Well," said Joe, "I hope you don't see anything that's agin it."

"No—no!" stammered his mother, recovering somewhat from the shock she had received; "but are you really in earnest, Joe—will you marry the widder?"

"To be sure I will, and that's the whole of it. I'm going up to see her this very day. I'll marry her if she'll have me, and be revenged on Melinda for cutting me as she has for that blasted Sparks. I'll teach 'em what's what."

Joe was as good as his word. He sought the widow and made his proposal. She was more astonished than she knew how to express, but she was more gratified than she was astonished.

ished. Fresh and fair as she was, considering her years, she had never given over the idea of winning another husband; but it had never entered her head that she could possibly secure so young and estimable a prize as Joe Chickweed.

Joe made it a special proviso in his proposal, that they should be married privately the day before the marriage of Sparks with the widow's daughter, and that it should be kept a secret till that wedding had taken place. To this the widow readily agreed, although it was a hard task sometimes for her to restrain the enjoyment she experienced, and prevent the secret being discovered.

The evening before the nuptials of Sparks and Melinda at length arrived, and all the preparations for the ceremony on the ensuing day were completed. When darkness had fairly set in, while Melinda was so occupied with the company and conversation of her soon-to-be husband as to be completely oblivious to all else, Mrs. Martin cautiously left the house, and meeting Joe near at hand, she hastened with him to the residence of the Chickweeds. The minister, who had been duly admonished to secrecy, was in attendance; and in less than half an hour afterwards Joe was a married man, and the no-longer widow was on her way back to her room—parting from Joe with a single but very enormous kiss, with which he was content to satisfy himself considering what was to follow from so doing on the morrow.

The wedding passed off next day to the entire satisfaction of all parties. The affair took place in the morning at the residence of the bride, and at the hour of noon all the guests, with the exception of Joe Chickweed, who had been formally invited, had departed. Why he remained so long it puzzled the newly married pair to surmise, as they had not supposed he would be present at all. Joe took it very easily, however, and seemed quite unembarrassed by the occasional lanterings of the happy Sparks.

"I s'pose," said Joe, addressing himself to the newly made husband, as they were all assembled in the parlor together—"I s'pose you will take up your residence in the village right away—buy you a nice house and live fashionable."

"Oh, no," replied Mr. Sparks—"don't know as I shall."

"What! Well, now, I calculate you don't have an idea of settling on a farm—you ain't used to that kind of work, you know."

"Don't know but I may," said Sparks, assuming a careless air and tone; "coming on hot weather, you know, and living in town is a bore in summer. Yes, think I shall try country life for a while; I ain't in the best of health, and a farm life may improve me."

"Well," replied Joe, deliberately, "can't say that I'm sorry you're going to stay with us. I think myself it would be to your benefit to work on a farm for a while; and we'll try to make it as comfortable for you as we can."

Mr. Sparks looked at him, and Mrs. Sparks looked at him; then they looked at one another and laughed.

"No doubt," remarked Mr. Sparks, "you will make a very agreeable neighbor—very agreeable indeed."

"Oh, well, be nearer than neighbors, a good sight—of course we will," said Joe, glancing with a look of intelligence toward the former widow.

Again Mr. and Mrs. Sparks glanced at one another, but this time they didn't laugh.

"What do you mean?" they asked, simultaneously.

"Oh, excuse me; I forgot that you didn't know what has transpired. The fact is, the widow, here, and myself, taking a mutual liking to each other, were married last night! We should have invited you to the wedding, but we knew you were so engaged."

"What!—married?" cried young Sparks, springing to his feet, while a look of horror overspread his features. His wife sat pale as a ghost, utterly unable to speak a word.

"Certainly, married," said Joe, coolly.

"Is this so?" he inquired, turning to the late widow.

"You may rely upon all he says," she replied.

"Then I have been swindled—imposed upon—deceived! And you knew of it—"

And he continued, in a violent tone, addressing his wife. "You to get me, while this infernal cheat gets all the property!"

"No—it's not so," exclaimed Melinda, bursting into tears; "I knew nothing of it.—And I thought you married me for yourself, and not for money—you pretend to have enough of that yourself!"

Reuben Sparks smiled a sickly and scornful smile.

"It's even as I thought; his money's so deep in bank that he never'll be able to dig it out," remarked Joe.

"You scheming rascal!" gasped Sparks, looking as if it would be the height of pleasure to eat him entirely up, body and bones.

"Oh, fire away! it don't hurt any; and I've got a long lease of the farm—"

"You scoundrel!"

"And the horses, and the steers—"

"Oh! you miserable cheat!"

"And the fixin's generally—"

"Fool!"

"And moreover," continued Joe, assuming

a more sober and sterner tone, and grasping Sparks firmly by the collar as he spoke—"among other things I've got a word or two of advice for you. You married Melinda in the expectation of stepping into a snug property, palming yourself off as a man of means to accomplish your end. You are the real schemer, but a part of your scheme has failed. Take my advice and it will be well with you: use your wife as you know you should—go to work like a man—and strive to be an honest one. And finally, don't let me hear you make use of any more such expressions as you just now bestowed upon me, or I'll thrash you within an inch of your life! Remember," added Joe, giving him a shake, as a terrier would a rat, "you're my son now, 'cordin' to law, and you must have a slight show of respect for your father!"

Reuben Sparks seemed to come at once to his senses, and after a little reflection concluded that the advice he had received was, upon the whole, the best he could get upon; and for many a year thereafter Joe Chickweed looked upon him as a most valuable assistant.

CURIOUS HISTORY OF THE USE OF COFFEE.

Coffee is of Asiatic origin, and was brought to the Occident by the Turks. They called it Calveh. Yehman, a province in Arabia, is generally considered the place where coffee sprang up. Certain it is, that Arabian herdsmen of the desert of Adshesria, approaching one evening the shores of the Euphrates, were the first to discover the enlivening power of coffee. Worn out as they were, after a tiresome journey through the desert, they were reclining beneath a coffee tree, and for pastime commenced chewing the coffee beans. They soon observed that their weariness passed away, and left them fine-spirited during the night. Next evening they repeated their pastime, and it had the same effect. They were convinced that there was hidden and refreshing power in the coffee beans.

It was then introduced as a kind of medicine for relaxation, for which purpose it was roasted, ground, and boiled in hot water, in the manner we prepare coffee now. Consequently the prohibition of wine-drinking by Mahomet, the use of coffee soon became in extensive demand all over Arabia, Turkey and Persia. From these countries coffee was introduced by the Venetians, in the year 1591, into Italy, to be used only as an enlivening medicine. At first they tried it with the leaves of the coffee-tree, which was, however, abandoned, and they resorted to the coffee beans and prepared them in the same manner as the Arabians. After a while it became a favorite beverage for dainty persons, and its importation from a foreign country rendered it, in the eyes of the aristocracy of that period, desirable.

From Venice, coffee was introduced to England, France and Holland. The first public coffee-house was opened in London in the year 1652; a few years afterwards a second appeared in Paris, and a third in Amsterdam. Not, however, until the year 1692, was coffee known in Germany; it was imported from Holland already roasted. The first public coffee-house was established at Leipzig, in the year 1729, which, no doubt, is the oldest coffee-house in the world, and it is even at the present day a place of public amusement. Two circumstances contributed principally to make coffee a general beverage in Germany; firstly, that coffee was excepted by the government from the taxes laid on beer and wine; and secondly the powers of coffee to produce an agreeable excitement without producing intoxication. These qualities made it the most agreeable to ladies and business men. The Jews in Germany, known to be the most active merchants, became exceedingly fond of this enlivening beverage, and also the poets. It is a well known story, that Rousseau, once on a visit to Voltaire, remarked to the latter, that coffee was poison. Voltaire replied:—"True, but a poison that affects the health very slowly, as I have been drinking it for sixty years."

The greatest opponents to coffee-drinking are the homeopathic doctors, who consider coffee as most injurious to health. Indeed it is to nervous people, particularly strong coffee; also to dyspeptics it may prove indigestible, but in the latter case, its ill-digestion arises from impure milk which is mixed with it.

The French and Germans drink more black coffee than white, and take soon afterward a glass of pure cold water, and that custom is one which it would be useful to adopt in this country; as in this manner coffee is not injurious to plethoric people; if they drink only a small quantity of it. It serves under this condition to aid digestion and to enliven the spirits. To young people, it is not so wholesome as beer soup, which is used for them in Germany. There is often added to coffee, roasted roots, as that of saffron or carrot, for instance, which diminishes the flavor. Roasted beans of cocoa, on the other hand, are most healthy and palatable if mixed with coffee. The Turks add different species, and the French pour rum in it, as do the Italians and Germans; and they use sometimes the yolk of ~~eggs~~ instead of cream, which is commendable where there is no good milk to be found. Particular care is everywhere taken, except in this country, not to roast or grind coffee be-

fore it is wanted for immediate use, otherwise it loses by exhalation the volatile oil which imparts such an excellent flavor to it.

The smoke of the roasted coffee is one of the most powerful disinfectants. Coffee is also an antidote to poisons of opium, cherry, laurel and intoxication. The consumption of coffee is from year to year increasing. In Europe alone, for instance, the importation in a period of ten years, from 1817 to 1827, increased from one hundred and sixty millions to two hundred and twenty-five millions of pounds.

The coffee tree reaches a height of twenty feet, has with its branches pyramidal formed evergreen leaves, and is considered one of the most beautiful of trees. In the third year it yields three pounds of beans. In highest estimation, concerning the quality, stands Mocha coffee from Arabia; next to it St. Domingo, Java, St. Jago de Cuba, and then Rio de Brazil and Cuba. However, one kind is found more palatable in one country than in another, and different nations give preference to a different kind of coffee.

THE ISLAND OF PERIM.—A bare, untenanted rock at the entrance of the Red Sea, known as the Isle of Perim, has suddenly become a point of great interest and figures largely in European politics. It is the Gibraltar of the Red Sea. The Mail and a portion of the passenger traffic between Europe and the East Indies and China, already goes by way of the Isthmus of Suez. A ship Canal connecting the Mediterranean and Red Seas, will lead to the abandonment of the Cape of Good Hope. Perim commanding the commerce of the Red Sea, will then be a point of the utmost importance. The railroad, already nearly completed across the Isthmus of Suez, will ensure most of the travel and considerable merchandise by this shorter route. England, foreseeing its importance, has very recently occupied and fortified this island, although it belongs to Turkey. France protests against it, and there is a strong probability that Russia will second her remonstrance, those powers holding that the stipulated integrity of Turkey is violated by this act of the English government.

THE REVELATIONS OF ASTRONOMICAL SCIENCE show that the sun is 3,900 times as far again from the earth as the earth is round. This distance is so great that it would take a railway carriage, moving at the rate of 100 miles every three hours, 330 years to get through it; but the earth itself, traveling with a speed of better than 68,000 miles per hour, gets through a journey of a like extent—that is, 95,000,000 miles—in something like two months. The nearest star is at least 200,000 times farther away than the sun. The light beams come from the sun to the earth in eight minutes and a quarter, but it must consume three years and a quarter upon its journey before it can arrive from the nearest star. But the nearest star is only on the inner confines of the vast star galaxy; the space that it takes the flash of light three years and a quarter to traverse, is nevertheless but a little space, almost swallowed up in the immensity by which it is surrounded, for it is computed that the most remotest of the milky way are 750 times as far away again as the nearest one.

A GOOD WIRELESS.—Did the defendant knock the plaintiff down with a malicious prepense?"

"No, sir; he knocked him down with a flat iron."

"You misunderstand me my friend; I want to know whether he attacked him with an evil intent."

"Oh, no, sir; it was outside the tent."

"No, no, sir; I wish you to tell me whether the attack was at all a preconcerted affair."

"No, sir; it was not a free concert affair; it was a circus."

YIELD OF MAPLE SUGAR.—The Montpellier (Vt.) correspondent of the Boston *Traveler* writes that the maple sugar season is about over, the crop being a full average one, or a trifle less than three pounds to the tree. Last year was an extraordinary season, the yield being over five pounds to the tree, or nearly enough, if equally distributed, and all kept for home consumption, to have supplied every family in the state.

A rather plain spoken clergyman once took for his text this passage in the Psalms:

"I said in my haste all men are liars."

Looking up, apparently as if he saw the Psalmist stand immediately before him he said:

"You said so in your haste did you, David? Well, if you had been here you might have said it after mature reflection."

Among the numerous casualties recently detailed, the following is decidedly melancholy.—The young man who recently went on a bridal tour with an angel in look mustine, has just returned with a tertignant in hoops.

A witness in an Irish Court of Justice, stated that he was suddenly roused from his slumber by a blow on his head. "And how did you find yourself?" asked counsel. "Fast asleep," replied the witness.

What is the reason, said one Irishman to another, that you and your wife are always disagreeing? "Because," replied Pat, "we are both of one mind—she wants to be master, and so do I."

North Carolina has now some 1,600 miles of railroad, and these works were begun when the State had not even an income of over \$100,000.

Cotton soaked in alum and salt, it is said, will cure the torments of a hollow and aching tooth. Worth trying, that.

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