

thinking only of itself * * * an iron-bound autocracy drunk with power, wedded to a philosophy and a theology divorced from religion as well as from life." The author gives us as a typical Irish bluffer a man who is merely a clever politician working to increase the temporal power of the Church. He paints in lurid colors the contrast between the richness of the ecclesiastical foundation and the poverty of the people who are being bled for its maintenance. The priests are so many political intriguers, whereas all the terrors of the Inquisition are constantly employed against laymen of "undoubted sincerity and ability" who refuse to become mere pawns in the political game. The purpose of "Father Ralph" is to paint the Irish Church as a huge political machine "thinking only of increasing and perfecting its strength at the expense of its spiritual power and its devotion to progressive truth."

In all this there is nothing new, any more than there is anything new in the heresy that "Father Ralph" would have the Irish Church sponsor in the name of "progressive truth." But there is a method in the author's madness. "Father Ralph" is part of the propaganda of the Philosophy of Bluff, which would escape the odium of its own unsavoury record by fixing it upon another. If there is a political church in Ireland it is the Protestant church that deserves the bays. The Catholic Church, "Father Ralph" to the contrary, never meddles in purely political matters. "The Priest in Politics" has no foundation in fact, but it has been used to advantage to cover up the ignoble part played by "The Parson in Politics." When Gladstone proposed to disestablish the Protestant Church in Ireland, the parsons, in the interests of spiritual truth, of course, were active in opposition. When the Protestant Church enlisted the whole force of the Crown to enable it to exact tithes from a people to whom its message was anathema, it did so in the interests of spiritual truth. But we need not refer to ancient history. It is in the interests of spiritual truth, of course, that the Protestant church has degraded itself into a mere adjunct of Carsonism. It is in the interests of spiritual truth that Pope Sir Edward took upon himself to order Bishop and moderator and cleric to observe "Ulster Day" in the way that seemed best to himself. The Synod of the "Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland" at its recent annual meeting in Belfast, unanimously adopted a "protest against Home Rule," in the interests of spiritual truth. The "Ulster Covenant" was read and signed in the Protestant churches—in the interests of spiritual truth. This is not the complete history of the part played by the "Parson in Politics," but of course we must never attribute a political motive to such activity. It is all in the interests of spiritual truth. If only the author of "Father Ralph" could quote such concrete cases against the Catholic Church he would indeed have framed a damning indictment. But when the boot is on the other foot we must not draw any such conclusion. When preachers and parsons meddle in politics we are to see in it a sublime example of their devotion to the religion of the gospel. And when Synods and Assemblies take sides in purely political matters we are to bow down in holy awe and believe they are defining the Scriptures.

We make no apology for "the priest in politics." He was not there to promote his own interests, as the parsons were and are, but to obtain some measure of justice for his persecuted people. He was the only educated man whose advice they could obtain, or to whom they could look for a lead in their struggle against oppression. England took good care that there should be no educated Catholic layman to whom the people could go for guidance. She did not put a price upon the head of the schoolmaster for nothing. The priest was of the people and from the people and with the people in their sufferings and sorrows. When he took his place at their head in their struggle against oppression he knew that the only reward that awaited him was the plank bed and the prison cell, but he did not shrink from the consequences. The day that made it necessary for him to be a politician has all but passed, and in the new era that is dawning for Ireland the people need no longer look to the priest to lead them in

political matters. Times have changed in Ireland. The day of the Ascendancy of a class has passed for ever, and the soggarth aroon has no need to be ashamed of the part he played in hastening its passing.

But when circumstances made it necessary that the priests should take a hand in politics can it be said of them that they abused their power? Let Sir Horace Plunkett, who is anything but an apologist for the Catholic Church in Ireland, be their judge. Says Sir Horace, "I have come to the conclusion that the immense power of the Roman Catholic clergy has been singularly little abused * * * The evil, commonly described as 'The Priest in Politics,' is, in my opinion, greatly misrepresented. * * * I believe that the over-active part hitherto taken in politics by the priests is largely the outcome of the way the Roman Catholics were treated in the past, and that this undesirable feature in Irish life will yield, and is already yielding to the removal of the evils to which it owed its origin, and in some measure its justification * * * I am convinced that if an anti-clerical movement were to succeed in discrediting the priesthood and lowering them in public estimation, it would be followed by a moral, social, and political degradation which would blight, or at least postpone, our hopes of national regeneration." Plunkett, as we have said, is anything but an apologist for the Church in Ireland. His book, "Ireland in the New Century," from which we have quoted, showed him to be such a partisan critic that it drew from Monsignor O'Riordan, the learned rector of the Irish College, Rome, a reply in the form of his famous "Catholicity and Progress in Ireland." His opinion of "The Priest in Politics" is on that account all the more remarkable and gratifying, and can be safely held to outweigh that of Gerald O'Donovan. Sir Horace is one of the outstanding figures in Irish public life of to-day. The unknown author of "Father Ralph" has in all probability become intimately acquainted with conditions in Ireland through the pages of Michael MacCarthy and F. H. O'Donnell.

COLUMBA

NOTES AND COMMENTS

Presumably the editor of the Christian Guardian would not credit himself with an adequate days' work if he failed during the course of it to rescue from the "muck heap" some ill-natured reflection upon Catholics. This time he is to the fore with a jibe at the Church in Spain for the imprisonment by the State of a "Protestant" naval officer for his refusal to attend Mass. It is of course matters not to the Guardian that that same government has distinguished itself in Methodist eyes by sundry acts of persecution (including imprisonment) against Catholic prelates and priests, for no other reason, too, than that they put fidelity to God and to their own consciences before adherence to unwarranted State enactments. In such contingencies, whether in Spain, in Portugal or in France, State tyranny came in for its due meed of praise from the editor of the Canadian organ of Methodism. It is convenient to forget these things sometimes,—just as easy as to forget that it is by no means an unheard of thing, even in Canada, for a military officer to be disciplined for neglect or refusal to attend church on State occasions.

AS TO THE particular incident of which the Guardian finds it convenient to make so much, would it not have been wiser to have had something more reliable than a mere press despatch to go upon before expressing itself so glibly? Apart from this we know no more about the affair than the Guardian's editor does—that is, nothing at all. We have had some experience, however, of the artless ways of the cable correspondent, especially where anything Catholic is concerned, and have had numerous illustrations of that simple little twist which can make white look black at a distance, and black white, green or any other desired color. We have no doubt that something of the kind has taken place in the instance referred to, and that a word of authentic explanation is all that is necessary to set it in its proper light. If not, and the Spanish Government has really been guilty of an act of unjustifiable aggression, no matter against whom, we shall be just as ready to condemn it as any

Protestant zealot can be. But, unlike the Christian Guardian, we are not in the habit of stampeding on the mere wild cry of a fanatic.

THE EXCITEMENT endeavored to be created out of this doubtful incident is all of a piece with the ordinary English-speaking Protestant idea of Spain. We are treated every little while in such papers as the Guardian to dissertations on the illiteracy of the Spanish people—an impression founded on pure ignorance or malice, or both. We also hear much of their "subservience to the priesthood," and other similar claptrap. The moral influence of the Spanish clergy and the responsiveness of the people to the same, we have no thought of denying. It is one of the glories of Spain, and while faith elsewhere has been streaming through a sieve, in the land of St. Teresa and St. Peter of Alcantara, of St. John of the Cross and St. Ignatius, it remains practically in its pristine freshness and simplicity. That this is so is largely due to the fidelity of the Spanish priesthood, and, the sneers of Protestant zealots notwithstanding, we pray God that it may long continue to be the predominant characteristic of the Spanish people. That this spirit has not always distinguished the Governments of Spain is matter of history, but a broad line should be drawn between rulers and people.

SOME INTERESTING side-lights have recently been shed on this subject by an English lady, Mrs. C. G. Hartley, who has travelled much in Spain and written some charming books descriptive of the country and its inhabitants. In an English periodical she has just been commenting on the common British delusion that the great majority of the population are illiterate and that education there is universally defective. This idea she condemns out of her own experience, and controverts vigorously such sweeping statements made by writers who do not know the country or understand the people. They have drawn pictures, she says, "untrue to the high intelligence of the Spaniards." She then goes on to recount her visits to the schools of the nation, primary, collegiate and technical, whose work, she adds, "compares favorably with that done in the most advanced schools in the largest towns in England." One testimony such as this is worth more than countless tomes from bigoted, shallow and irresponsible writers who find such favor in the Protestant Sunday schools of Great Britain and America.

WE CONFESS never to have had any patience with the arguments drawn by interested scribes from the assumed illiteracy of such countries as Spain. A nation, after all, is not to be judged so much by its "book-larin" as by the moral habits and manners of its people. And in this particular the people of Spain, as those of Catholic Ireland, stand the test well. We have no intention of enlarging upon the subject here, but before leaving it for the present, cannot forbear a further quotation from the writer named. As she travelled about Spain it was, she says, a continuous astonishment to her how the secular and religious lives overlapped. "To the ardent and simple hearts of the people all things relating to earth merge naturally into the things relating to Heaven. . . . The churches remain the homes of the people." Or this, from a Scottish member of Parliament: "I cannot but remark how kindly are the manners of the people. Manners, did I say? Everyone has the manners of a gentleman. Even the countrymen working in the fields would pass for courtiers." Would not this thriving country of Canada, we may ask, be the better for the transplanting of a little of that spirit here? That it still thrives in the Peninsula should cause us to thankfully repeat the saying of a great poet: "Culture's chill disdain Did keep the vulgar Reformation out of Spain."

ONE OF THE outstanding features of the Reformation, as remarked by historians, was that as faith departed from the nations of northern Europe it blossomed into flower in outlying portions of the earth. The glory of the missions in North and South America, and in far Asia, brought consolation to the hearts of those who wept over the destruction and desecration at home. What happened in the sixteenth century shows signs of repetition in the twentieth. As the governing authorities of Catholic countries have turned upon their

Mother, the Faith has shown renewed vigor in other parts of the world. Witness the extraordinary success of Catholic missions in China, India and Africa. A late summary states that whereas in the year 1800 there were in India 475,000 Catholics governed by 2 Archbishops, 2 Bishops, and 2 Vicars Apostolic, there are to-day 1,700,000 Catholics, 27 Archbishops and Bishops, and 1,336 priests. The figures for China are even more remarkable. In 1800 there were but 202,000 Catholics in that country, whereas to-day there are close on 2,000,000 with 1,450 missionaries, 700 native priests, 1,886 nuns, and 8,000 catechists. So with Africa. As against 15,000 Catholics in Northern Africa and a few scattered settlements on the East coast, that continent can now show over 1,000,000 Catholics, with 3,381 missionaries. A consoling result surely, but yet the harvest still unreaped is great beyond description, and as always, the laborers too few.

IT WAS A Presbyterian, not a Catholic, who thus gave expression to his feelings in contemplation of the piety and reverence of the people of Ireland. The passage may be found in "Home Life in Ireland," by Robert Lynd:

"If you are in a little town in any part of Ireland—except the north-west—about noon, when the chapel bells ring for the Angelus, you will see all the men suddenly taking off their hats and crossing themselves as they say their midday prayers. The world loses its air of work or of commonplace idleness, and the streets take on an intense beauty for the moment as the old people and the young half hide their eyes and murmur a prayer to the Mother of God. The boy walking by a loaded cart stands still with bared head or stumbles forward, praying as he walks. In the doors of the houses, in the entries on the bridge over the river, the town assumes a multitudinous reverence as the tide of prayer sweeps through it to the music of the bells. Even the policeman, ludicrously stiff in his military uniform, lowers his head with a kind salute and offers homage to heaven. I confess I like this daily forgetfulness of the world in the middle of the day. It brings wonder into almost every country town in Ireland at least once every day."

In this particular Ireland and Spain are one.

MORALITY OF SUICIDE

ATHEISM AND MATERIALISM FROM NURSERY FOR DISCIPLINES OF THE COWARD SCHOOL

IN THE well known Stonyhurst Manuals of Catholic Philosophy (Longman's), Rev. Joseph Rickaby, S. J., devotes a chapter of his "Moral Philosophy" to the question of suicide, a subject which has tortured many a man's mind since the beginning of human history, and about which Hamlet has his say in the famous monologue, beginning, "To be or not to be." Parenthetically the opinion of Napoleon on the same matter was summed up in one of his cogent sentences, "We must will to live and know how to die," and the great warrior who had been familiar with death during all his life was altogether against self-destruction as a "way out" of pain. "There is not," he once said, "sufficient in the Old Roman in me to suggest suicide, and I will work out my destiny without the aid of self-administered poison." Accordingly many refuse to accept the story that he attempted to commit suicide at Malmaison on the night before his second abdication. However, to come to Father Rickaby. Suicide, he says, we understand as the direct compassing of one's own death, and this is an act never lawful. He then refers to the hard cases that put the moralist on his mettle in order to restrain them by reason. Why should not the solitary invalid destroy himself? Why should not death be sought as an escape from temptation? Why not have suicide licensed? The Jesuit quotes the philosopher Cayley as in effect saying that if every disgust justified suicide, then the fact of being alive would constitute justification, the melancholy (a word which comes from the Greek, meaning "black disposition") mind being naturally predisposed to take as bad and insupportable that which is a least tolerable.

There is a moral crookedness, inordination and unreasonableness that is intrinsic to the act of suicide apart from its consequences. It is natural to every being animate, and unanimate to the full extent of entity and power, to maintain itself and to resist destruction as long as it can. This is the struggle for existence, one of the primary laws of nature, and man has intelligence and power over himself that he may conduct his own struggle wisely and well.

It may be objected that man is only bound to self-preservation so long as life is a blessing—that under stress of adverse circumstances it is sometimes answered that whereas death is the greatest of evils, it is foolish and wicked to resort to dying as a refuge against any other calamity. But this answer proves too much. It would show that it is

never lawful even to wish for death whereas, under many conditions such as those now under consideration; death is a consummation devoutly to be wished, and may be most piously desired, as Ecclesiasticus says: (xxx. 17), "Better is death than a bitter life and everlasting rest than continual sickness."

The truth seems to be, says the Jesuit, that there are many things highly good and desirable in themselves which become evil when compassed in a particular way. The death of a great tyrant or persecutor may be a blessing to the universe, but his death by the hand of an assassin is an intolerable evil. So is death in fact esse (in itself), as the schoolmen say, an everlasting rest; but no death in fieri (to be done) when that means dying by your own hand. There the unnaturalness and the irrationality come in. A mother, watching the death agony of her son may piously wish it over; but it would be an unmotherly act to lay her own on his mouth and smother him. To lay violent hands on one's self is abidingly cruel and unnatural more so than if the suicide's own mother slew him.

In view of modern tendency on the part of certain prisoners to go on "hunger strikes" and so invite death Father Rickaby's view is interesting. He says: "A man's taking food periodically is as much a part of his life as the coursing of the blood in his veins.

It is doing himself no less violence to refuse food ready to hand when he is starving, on purpose that he may starve, than to open a vein on purpose to bleed to death—especially when the food is readily accessible. Again, to destroy a thing is the exclusive right of the owner and master of the same.

If, therefore, man is his own master, in the sense that no one else can claim dominion over him, may he not destroy himself? The metaphysician will say that man cannot be his own master any more than he can be his own father. Yet the Catholic who knows his Master and Maker will not need to have recourse to any other argument than that which the simple catechism teaches him. Even among the Greeks it was taught (by Aristotle for instance) that the citizen belongs to the State and that suicide constituted robbery of the State.

The great deterrent against suicide in cases where misery meets with recklessness, is thought of Hamlet: "In that sleep of death what dreams may come,"—above all, the fear of being confronted by an angry God. Apart from belief in God's judgment and a future state in any other argument, the moral arguments against suicide may be good logic, but they make poor rhetoric for those who need them most. Men are wonderfully imitative in killing themselves. Once the practice is come in vogue, it becomes a rage, an epidemic. Atheism and materialism form the best nurseries for the contagion of suicide. It is a shrewd remark of Madame de Staël: "Though there are crimes of a darker hue than suicide, yet there is none other by which man seems so entirely to renounce the protection of God."—Catholic Bulletin.

THE CHURCH AND MARRIAGE

THE work which the Son of God began upon earth continued until all time in the Church, which speaks in His own name, with His own authority, and with a voice that, in the things of the Spirit, can never err, said Rev. Father Sheppard, O. S. B., in a recent sermon on The Church and Marriage. He continued: Her doctrines shine forth as the infallible Revelation of God to man, demanding absolute assent, allowing of no discussion convicting the rebel and the doubter of hateful treason against the veracity of the Most High. It is not surprising—that the most wonderful of the natural operations of human life, the union of man and woman for the continuance of the race, should engage in a special manner and degree the attention of the Saviour and His Church. For though he called it a natural operation, yet it was also in a very real sense above the natural; since the offspring of the union was an immortal being whose soul God alone had the power to create. That offspring, made up of body as well as soul, was a compound being endowed with faculties, powers, instincts, which required sedulous care and cultivation, lest they might be marred and frustrated by neglect and evil influences.

HUMAN LOVE A PRECIOUS GIFT

Human love, the love between husband and wife, youth and maid, was indeed one of the most precious gifts of God, but if an affection deliberately ignored or overrode the laws of God and the imperative needs of the souls of parents and of offspring it was no longer worthy of the name of love, since it flowed not from the source and fount of Love; it was a spurious imitation unworthy of the esteem of rational men.

There could be no doubt, the preacher went on, that Our Lord's reason for raising marriage from the low state into which it had fallen among the Jews and Gentiles to the dignity of a sacrament lay in the tremendous responsibilities involved. The primary end of marriage was the begetting and rearing of children that they might become first and above all else "fellow citizens of the saints and members of the household of God."

ESSENTIALS OF THE SACRAMENT

Accordingly, it was for the Church to define the essentials of the sacra-

ment, and to lay down the conditions of its worthy reception; it was hers to make laws to ensure that the primary purpose of marriage was not endangered or frustrated by the caprice or blind passion of man. The Church could not allow the right of any secular government to trespass in that department. The state might legislate concerning the temporal good of matrimony, such as wealth, property or title; and in this sphere secular enactments were valid in conscience as in civil law. But when the State went beyond this province and sought to allow, for example, Christians to remarry after divorce, when the lawful spouse was still alive, or to pronounce upon essentials of marriage; then the Church uncompromisingly proclaimed that such laws, in so far as they were at variance with her own enactments, held good utterly in regard to their legal effects, and had no validity in the domain of conscience.

It was strange that these laws of the Church should present a difficulty to any reasonable man. Laws there must be if marriage is the sacred thing the Son of God had declared it to be, and there could assuredly be no more competent legislator than the Church. Secular states and governments by their low ideals of marriage and by the inconsistency of their laws had shown how utterly unsafe they were as guides in a matter so vital to the human race. Why was the Catholic Church alone to be held up to execration for maintaining the sublimity of this great sacrament?

THE CHURCH IS INTOLERANT

"We have heard much of late about the 'Intolerance and Arrogance of the Church of Rome in these matters,' Father Sheppard exclaimed. "The charge is in a sense absolutely true. The Church is intolerant and is arrogant in the face of all systems (as distinct from individuals) that are at variance with her own essential teaching. In this she is like her Divine Founder. To anyone who studies the Gospels impartially, it must be evident that Our Divine Lord, though infinitely meek and humble of heart," was at the same time the most intolerant Person that ever trod this earth: and His Apostles were in this His faithful imitators. I have no doubt whatever that if Jesus Christ and His Apostles were walking on English soil to-day they would be pilloried in the newspapers by a section of the broad-minded public as intolerant bigots and fanatics, and indignant citizens would write to the daily press demanding if there were no redress against such disturbers of domestic tranquillity, who brought peace but the sword" into law-abiding English homes."

HIGHEST CONCEPTION OF CONJUGAL LIFE

The Church was the only Christian body. Father Sheppard added, that without discussion, without hesitation, and without compromise upheld the sanctity, the inviolability of the sacred obligations of the marriage bond. And what were the results? Wherever the laws of the Church were most faithfully obeyed there was found the highest conception of conjugal life, the most dazzling domestic purity, and the fewest instances of divorce. If one sought to know what happened when the Church's laws were scouted and despised, let him look to the results of our English divorce courts, to the Protestant parts of America, and the pagan parts of France. Yet the Church was reproached because she would not permit the gratification of every whim and caprice that might enter the unformed mind of youth and maid, because she would not acknowledge that every attachment between man and woman came from God, and insisted that reason as well as sentiment must enter into love. She wondered how the souls of her children, whether parents or offspring, might be preserved in Christian faith and Christian morals. Christ's religion being so sure and final, how could it be a matter of indifference what was the religion of those who entered upon the marriage contract and brought forth children? It was only an age of loose thinking, of shallow scepticism, and of criminal indifference that could find fault with the Catholic Church for demanding the practice of the Catholic faith as a condition for the worthy reception of marriage by her children.

A HUNDRED NEGROES

ARE CONFIRMED BY CARDINAL FARLEY IN COLORED CHURCH

Cardinal Farley officiated the other day at the confirmation exercises of St. Mark Church, (colored) at 65 West 138 street, New York. Assisting him were Mgr. Wall and Fathers Carroll, Donlin, Stewart, O'Keefe, Devey, Sullivan, Larkin, McGrath, Byrne, Fuller and Father Christopher Plunkett, pastor of the church.

One hundred negroes were confirmed, of whom seventy-five were children. Thirty-five were converts. In the middle of the Cardinal's ad-

dress he stopped and asked all under twenty one years old to stand up.

"I want you all to pledge that you will take no intoxicating liquors until you are twenty one," he said. "If you live until then without getting the drinking habit, the chances are that you will never become addicted to the use of intoxicants. If you start now your life will be made unhappy."

THREE HUNDRED YEARS AGO

In a lecture recently in London on "Some Modern Dangers to Religion," Mr. Benson, M. A., remarked that: "Three hundred years ago it was proclaimed that the Catholic Church was the enemy of the Bible, and that it was Martin Luther who discovered the Bible locked up in the monasteries. The only guardian of the Bible to day, as always, appears to be the Catholic Church. Three hundred years ago non-Catholics justified faith without works. Now they justified works without faith. It did not matter what people did to-day so long as their heart was in the right place. That was one of the most comfortable and consoling doctrines ever heard. Three hundred years ago, at the Reformation, certain parts of the Catholic Church had been abolished. What had they got in their place? For the feast of Corpus Christi had been substituted the Harvest Festival; for the Midnight Mass which ushered in the birth of the Saviour they had a watch-night service on New Year's Eve, the opening of the secular year."

Back to paganism, in short. That is what we owe to Martin Luther and "private judgment."—Freeman's Journal.

IRELAND AND ITS PRIESTS

"Once a statement becomes generally accepted as a fact it takes a lot of killing," says the Dublin Leader. "Ireland is written up as a country over-run with priests and so generally it is accepted that even Catholics who ought to know better believe it. The contrary is the fact; Ireland is rather over-run comparatively with parsons and ministers, as Mr. Gallowsby Riggs has shown so often in these pages. To go no further back than the last two counties that he dealt with—in Sligo the non-Catholic parsons and ministers are 1 to every 187 Protestants of various sects, while the priests are only 1 to every 1,093 Catholics; in Mayo the Protestants of various sects have 1 clergyman to 111 persons, whilst the priests are only 1 for every 1,580 persons. Yet Ireland is believed by millions to be a large number of priests! As far as we can see, Dublin certainly could do with a large addition of priests. In such populous parishes as Marlboro Street and Westland Row the number of priests, in comparison with the population of Catholics, is so very small that it must be impossible for the clergy to keep in personal touch with their congregations. And yet Ireland is held up as a country over-run by priests! The circumstances of the times appear to us to call for more priests, and particularly for a large number of priests equipped by temperament and training for taking an active part in social work, including labor and economic questions."

There are times when it is hard to know what it is that God wants us to do, when we stand perplexed at the parting of the ways undecided as to which road to take; when we pray and pray but without receiving, or appearing to receive, any help. The only thing to do in such cases, if a decision must be made, is to make it in God's name and trust in Him to do the rest.

THE JOURNEY

By many a way and many a day
I am come home again;
Home by the heart-remembered way
Whereof my feet were fain.

For many a day, by many a way
I wandered at my will,
My will: God smiled to hear me say,
Shaping, directing still.

In many a garden I sat down
With heartease and content,
He hand upon my shoulder laid
Still pushed me that I went.

By many days, and many ways
Praise God I come again
Home to the mountains in a haze,
And the same shining rain.
Now when I would sit down and rest,
Nor yet the table's spread:
The chamber for the welcome guest,
The pillows for his head.

By many a way and many a day
He leads me still for sure,
Where life continueth in one stay,
And the good days endure.

I shall sit down beneath the trees
Where living waters spring,
And in the country of Much Ease
Forget my wandering.

—KATHERINE TYRAN, in London Tablet.

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