Self-Inflicted Wounds.

BY REV. C. H. SPURGEON.

"How long wilt thou cut thyself?"—Jer. 47:5.

Travellers in the East tell us that among the most melancholy scenes they witness is the following: Men it first upon themselves very grievous voluntary wounds, and then exhibit themselves in public. They even disfigure themselves with gashes and cuts in the presence of excited throngs. I am speaking of what has occurred even within the last few years among the Moslems. When some great prophet or emir is coming that way, a certain number of fanatical Mahometans take swords, spears, and other sharp instruments, and gash themselves terribly therewith, cutting their breasts, their faces, their heads, and all parts of their bodies. Frequently they have to take care to dress themselves in white sheets, in order that, as the blood flows copiously from their bodies, it may be the more clearly seen, that they may become the more ghastly spectacles of misery, or the more fully display the religious excitement under which they labor. Avery thing in the East remains for ever the same, this Moslem superstition carries us back to the olden times whereof we read in the Old Testament, when the priests of Baal, having cried in vain to their idol, cut themselves with lances and with knives. Thus they displayed their inward zeal, and thus, perhaps, they hoped to move the pity of their god. The Lord expressly forbade His people, the Jews, to perpetrate such folly. They were not even to shave the corners of their beards, or to hack their hair, as the Orientals do in the hour of their grief; and then they were further prohibited from injuring their bodies by the command, "Ye shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor print any marks upon you: I am the Lord." (Lev. 19:28.) Men in Eastern lands, not only in connection with fanaticism, but in reference to domestic affairs, will cut themselves to express their grief and anguish, or to make other people believe that they are feeling such grief and anguish. We congratulate ourselves that we are free from at least one foolish custom.

I. First, dear friends, I shall ask this question very deepairingly: "How long wilt then cut thyself?"—for many are cutting themselves very terribly, and will have to feel the wounds thereof for a long, long time; neither can we induce them to cease therefrom. I allude, first, to some professors of religion who have been church-members for ten, twenty, or more years, and yet have practically done nothing at all for the Saviour. If they were really to awaken to a sense of their neglect, I do not know how long they would be in anguish, or how deep would be their distress; for if True mourned that he had lost a day when he had done no good action for twenty-four hours, and he but a heathen, what would happen to a christian if he were really to see his responsibility before God, and to feel that he has not only lost a day but a year—perhaps many years? Have not some of you well-nigh lost a whole lifetime?

Oh, if I am addressing such—and honestly in the sight of God I fear I am—then how long will you chasten yourselves for your neglect? It must be long before you can forgive yourselves for such wicked indolence. How long will you afflict yourselves to think that you should have suffered time which you can never recall, the opportunities which you will never enjoy again, to go by you wasted? Do I make you feel uncomfortable? I shall thank God if I do; and I shall be happy, indeed, if, instead of cutting yourselves with vain regrets, you lacerate yourselves with my sharp remarks as with spears and knives, and then gird up your loins, and say, "God helping me, there shall never be another wasted year, nay, nor another wasted day!"

The same way be applied, and applied very solemnly, too, to those who backslide—who, in addition to being useless, are injurious, because their example tends to hinder others from coming to Christ. Oh, if any of you that name the name of Jesus, and have been happy in his service, and have enjoyed high days and holy days in his presence, turn aside, I shall use this lamentation over you. The Lord will bring you back and save you, as I believe; but oh, how long will you cut yourselves? You will feel in after life how grievously you have injured your souls. David's great sin was put away so that he did not die, but he was never the same David as before. The Lord, out of very love to him, chastened him sorely, and pursued him with plague upon plague. His family became his dishonor and his sorrow. He went with broken bones to the grave—a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. How grievously he had injured himself! How long he had to cut himself with anguish for that one sin!

What is true of David applies also to others who have, in any great measure turned aside. Solomon, in a high degree, hurt himself by his terrible follies. In the New Testament, Peter is a conspicuous example. It is a tradition that whenever Peter heard the cock crow he used to weep; and I do not wonder at it. Alas! if you and I should ever be stiff red to feel any grievous sin, it may be all done in ten minutes, but it cannot be got rid of in fifty years. We shall bear the scars of that ten minutes' sin until the Lord shall take us home, and permit us to wake up "without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing," in the full likeness of our perfect Lord. Oh, my brethren, watch anxiously lest you have to mourn for years over the sin of an instant.

There is one thing which comes after these, and comes in connection with them. If you and I should know that souls have been lost—lost as far as we are concerned—through our neglect, how long should we cut ourselves on that account? A dear soul said to me yesterday, "My husband died. He had been a sad drunkard, but in his last illness, through the blessing of God upon those who visited him, I trust he found peace. He said he believed in the Lord Jesus, and there is my comfort. But oh, if he had died without finding Christ, I should have been indeed a widow! I know not what could have comforted me." I am grateful that our sister called in her Christian friends, and that, by their efforts and her prayers, she was spared the keenest edge of sorrow. "Surely the bitterness of death is past." But suppose you were to lose your son, and that your son should die in sin which he learned of you; or in sin which you saw in him and never rebuked! Suppose I say, your son should die in his iniquity. Shall I tell you how you will behave yourself when the news comes to you that he is dead? You will get by yourself alone, and cry, like David, "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!" You can lay your children down upon the bed all stark and cold, and follow them to the tomb, and even sing as you commit their mortal remains to the grave, when you know that they die in hope; but if they perish in their sin, guilty, red-handed, unforgiven, what will you say to yourselves?

These are solemn things, but there is deep truth in them, and they ought to be considered by all of you who profess to be Christians. I knew one who used to have a man calling upon him in the way of business, and bringing certain articles which he bought across the counter. This tradesman said one day to himself, "I have dealt with that man for nine or ten years, and we have scarcely passed the time of day. He has brought in his work, and I have paid him across the counter, but I have never tried to do him any good. Surely this cannot be right. Providence has put him in my way, and I ought at least to have asked him whether he is saved in Christ." Well, the next time the man came, our good brother's spirit failed him, and he did not like to begin a religious conversation. The man never came again, but a boy brought in the next lot of goods. 'How is this?' said the shopkeeper. 'Father is dead,' said the boy. My friend, the shopkeeper, said to me, "I could never forgive myself. I could not stay in the shop that day. I felt that I was guilty of that man's blood. But I had not thought of it before. How can I ever clear myself from the guilty fact that when I did think of it, my ungracious timidity prevented me from opening my mouth." My own dear friends, do not bring upon yourselves such cutting regrets!

One other most solemn use may be made of this question: God grant that it may never be so, but if any one of you should die in your sins, how long will you regret it, think you? It looks dreadfully possible that some of you will perish for ever, since you have so often been entreated to come to Christ, and have never come. O soule, how long—how long will you grieve and mourn when it shall come to this? According to my reading of that book—and I would gladly read it otherwise if I did not feel that truth and honesty forbid me to do so—your loss, your anguish will be for ever. For ever you will cut yourselves. For ever you will lament that, when the opportunity was so near you, you put it away from you, and when Christ was ready to receive you, you would not be received, but committed eternal suicide.

II. There I leave this very painful use of the text, to try and use it at greater length in a happier sort, by way of consolation and hopeful comfort to those who will, we trust, be soon brought to receive the Lord Jesus. "How long wilt thou cut thyself?" I shall ask this question, hopefully, trusting that in many their sorrow is nearing its end. This text may be very profitably and prudently applied *to those who have been bereaved*, and who, being bereaved, sorrow, and sorrow to excess. I hope that I am not about to say a harsh word, but I would deal faithfully with rebellious repining. "Jesus wept," and he that does not weep when he loses a dear one must be something less than a man, and unworthy to be called a Christian. But there is such a thing as carrying to an extreme our sorrow for those we lose, till it becomes rebellion against God. You remember the Quaker saying to the lady who was wearing very deep double mourning years after one of her children had died, "Madam, hast thou not forgiven God yet?" And there is truth about that remark; some do not forgive God for what he has done. Their sorrow amounts to this—that they have a quarrel with God over his dispensations. 'How can he be good and he have taken away my mother?' said one to me. 'How can God be good and have taken away my child?" cried another.

There is a want of faith, a want of reverence, a want of love, a want of many sweet and placid graces, in such mourning as that; and, without dwelling long upon it, I beg to put the question to any mourner here who is mourning with the ungodly sorrowing of the heathen—as if there was no hope. 'How long wilt thou cut thyself?' Is not thy child in Jesus' bosom? Has not thy friend gone among the angels, to join the sweet singers of God? Put away thy disputing and murmuring, and either, like Aaron, hold thy peace, or better still, like Job, bless the name of the Lord, and rejoice in thy God.

But now, turning to quite another character, I would use the same expression for another purpose. There are some persons with whom God is dealing in great love, and yet they are very rebellious. They persevere in known sin, although the evil way has become exceedingly hard to them. They seem as if they would walk over red hot ploughshares to hell. I have known some who have found the pleasures which once delighted them to become a nuisance, a trouble, a pain, a disgust, and a weariness; and yet they continue in their unprofitable course. They are following a wild course of life, and they are losing money at it, and they are likely to lose much more. They are plunging down. What are they thinking of? "How long wilt thou cut thyself?" Already they have met with great disaster and misfortunes, they will meet with many more. When the dogs are out hunting, they run in packs. The plagues of Egypt are ten at least, and every one who plays the Pharaoh may expect the full number.

I spoke some time ago with the son of a very godly man. He seemed to be an infidel outright, and had taken to horse-racing, and the like. My inmost soul was grieved concerning him: I could have wept. As he talked very largely, and mild words were lost on him, I said to him, "Keep as many horse races as you can, and go in for gambling most heartily, for thus the sooner you will lose all your money. Some prodigals never come back to the Father's house until they sink as low as the pig's trough, and that is probably the way for you. When you get a hungry belly, I trust you will come home." He knows what my warning meant, but I fear he intends to make it true. The way of transgressors is hard; and it is a mercy when it becomes so hard that they are resolved to quit it for another and a better way. Is this happening to anybody here? 'How long wilt thou cut thyself?' Have you not had enough of the consequences of your folly? Have you not played the fool long enough? "How long wilt thou cut thyself?"

I might use this expression even to the Jewish nation itself. Ah, God, through what seas of trouble have they had to swim since the day when they said, "His blood be on us, and on our children"! Alas, the story of Israel is enough to make one's blood turn to ice within his veins! And will they not come back? Will they not come back? Must they be hunted in Germany, and hounded in Russia? Shame on the countries that dare do such things! But must it be so? God grant that they may no longer provoke their Holy One to indignation against them! How long will they cut themselves? For still these great evils happen to them according to the eternal counsels of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, because of their unbelief. When they turn to the Messiah, their glory shall return also, and the crown wherewith God crowned his people shall again be set upon their head, and their ancient city shall again be "beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth." Assuredly, the Lord gave the land of Canaan to Abraham and his seed forever; how long will they shut themselves out of it?

But, now, all this has rather kept me from my main design, which is to speak to those dear friends of ours who are afflicting their souls with needless fears. No good can possibly come by a continuance in their unhappy moods; they are cutting themselves quite needlessly. They might at once have peace and rest and joy, if they were willing to accept the Lord's gracious way of salvation. You, who are burdened with sin, and are trying to get rid of it, but will not come to Christ for deliverance—I want to ask each one of you, "How long wilt thou cut thyself? Why, there are some persons who think that before they can believe in Christ they must undergo a world of torture! Whence do they derive the notion, and what scripture do they twist to support it? Find me, if you can, any place where the Lord requires this at your hand—that you should be dragged about by the devil—that you should be despairing, that you should be tempted to blaspheme, and all that. I know that some who have come to Christ have endured such misery, but I defy you to prove that it is any part of the gospel, and that we are to preach up such an experience as a necessary preface to believing in Christ. The case is far otherwise. Hear me, and be not obstinately wedded to your wretchedness. You are a sinner: you cannot question that fact. Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. If you trust him—you are saved. This is brief, is the glad tidings of salvation. This is the gospel way. Who has required at your hands that you should despond?

"Oh," said one to me, "I cannot think that the way can be so plain, for my grandfather was so miserable for years that they had to put him into a lunatic asylum, before he found the Saviour." You smile, but the good woman who told me this was in terrible earnest. I cannot help quoting what she said, for it was the natural and outspoken form of an error which lurks in thousands of minds. I believe that many think they must be driven near to madness, or they will not be able to come to Christ. But what benefit could this despair possibly be to you? If the gospel were, 'Doubt and be saved," I would bid you doubt. And if it were, "Despair and be saved," I would preach up despair to you with all my might, though it might go a little against the grain. But it is not so written. The scripture is, 'Believe: trust: confide: rely. Trust in Jesus—and you are saved."

A sick man is dying, and the physician says, "Here is medicine that will restore you: will you take it?" The dying man answers, "Sir, I believe in your medicine, but I will not take it till I feel better." If that man dies, who murders him? Shall the physician be blamed? Surely not. On his own head his death must lie. And recollect that it will be as certainly your ruin to refuse Christ because you want to be better, as it will be to refuse him from any other reason. Any reason which leads us to reject the Lord Jesus is a bad one. One man refuses Christ because he hates him, and he blasphemes him; another refuses him because he thinks that he must be a little better; there may be a difference in the motive, but the result will amount to the same thing. Take heed, I pray you, lest through your pride in refusing to receive the gospel just now, and just as you are, you should put it away from you till you get where there will be no gospel preaching, and no invitations to Christ, and you are cast away forever.

Now let me ask you this question: what good have you got by all this up till now? O you, good sir, who always mean to have Christ by-and-by, how much further have you got after all your good intentions and painful waitings? You used to sit in that pew, twelve, fifteen, twenty years ago, mayhap; and even then you had hopeful resolves. Are you any nearer Christ now than you were then? Say, does the preaching affect you any more than it did in those bygone days? 'No," say you, "not so much." This is a dangerous symptom: what does it mean? Has the preacher change? I will take my share of the blame. I grow older, I know. Perhaps I get more stupid too; but still, when I sat yesterday to see the converts coming to join the church, I saw them till I had not physical power to see any more, for God had brought so many to come and tell me that I had led them to the Saviour. Therefore I think that there cannot be much difference in my preaching. It must be you that are getting hard! I fear you are getting chilled into indifference, and I pray that the deadly process may go no further.

Would to God that you, my dear hearers, would leave all things else, and just come and cast yourselves on Jesus! If you will not, I must again persecute each one of you with this enquiry, "How long wilt thou cut thyself?" How long must you go on with your piteous prayers, and get no answer? Must you have more tears, more groans, more cries, more despairs, more regrets, more broken vows? How long will you cut yourselves with these vain attempts to be your own Saviour? How long? How long? God end it ere you cross the portal of this house of prayer, and go down these stone steps, which will again conduct you to the level of a careless world! Stop here till you have yielded yourself to Jesus. I beseech you not to go home a stranger to eternal life. The Lord grant that that you may now throw yourself into the arms of Jesus, for his dear name's sake!

—Very few persons recognizes the large possibilities of good with which conversation is freighted. It can diffuse intelligence, spread knowledge, inspire new ideas, animate the drooping spirit, move the feelings, kindle the affections, stimulate the activities. These possibilities may be gradually made realities by every one who will constantly and patiently put in practice the two essential parts of good conversation—to seek for the best that is in one's self. No large fund of information, no years of culture, no powers of eloquence are necessary in order to do this.

The Tramp.

BY ARTHUR O. GARRISON.

He was about gone. The persons that stood around him knew that, even without the sage opinion of the village doctor who had just driven up in his sulky. The least experienced among the little crowd of onlookers knew from the queer and indescribable lustre of his eye, that his time was short. He was rather a forlorn looking picture as he lay there on the grass by the roadside, protected from the rays of the summer sun by the shade of a kindly oak tree. He was evidently a tramp from his general appearance. Ragged clothes, long matted hair, rough beard, worn shoes, and a face so sad, haggard and thin, that the sight of it gave one the impression that the owner had seen hard and troublesome times.

"Well, boy," said the doctor, "we mustn't leave him here to die, lying on the hard ground. Pick him up, some of you, and carry him right up to my house. Be easy with him."

"I'm jest as much obleged to ye, doc, but ye don't need to take the trouble to lug me to no house. Don't make no difference with me now, nohow. I'm about pegged out, I reckon, 'n I guess I might as well stay right here.

"Ye see, doc," he continued, "I've ben a hoofin' it 'round fer so long, sleepin' outdoors, an' in barns, an' the like, that it kinder seems more natural like out here. I'm nearly to the end of my row, I 'low, an' if ye be minded ter listen, I'll tell ye 'bout myself."

The men who stood around sat down on the grass under the tree, ready to listen, and the doctor, taking a place near him, said,

"Certainly, I am ready to listen to you."

"Well, in the first place, I ain't always bin a tramp, like I am now. Ten year ago, I was a young man about twenty-five year old—don't look so surprised, fer I know I look like I was fifty; trouble hev done it—and had as good a prospect fer success as any other feller in the town where I lived. I was in a store with an uncle of mine, and he was just about to make me a partner in the business, and retire from active life hisself, when I left."

"What made you leave?" interrupted the doctor, "you say you had good prospects for suc—"

"Jest wait a minit, doc, I'm a comin' to that. One summer, jest ten year ago this next June, there was a lady from New York and her daughter come to spend the summer in our town. They was swell folks, I tell ye. They took a house at the edge of the town, an' set up livin' with two or three servants they had brought with 'em from the city. It wasn't long afore one day their carriage come a drivin' up to the door of our store, drawn by two fine hosses, and drav by a black coachman.

"'John,' says the old man—my name's John Haverman, gentlemen—'John,' says he, 'run out and see what they want.'

"I wasn't obj'ctin', an' it's my 'pinion he'd a gone hisself, if he'd bin a bit more spry on his legs. I run out to the carriage, and the young lady said she guessed she'd git out; and she giv me her hand to help her. Such a dainty little hand as she had! It was about as big as mine was when I was six year old. She was what they call a blonde—light hair, blue eyes and fair skin, you know—and she was a beauty. She went into the store and wanted to see some buttons, and I was so confused that I could hardly wait on her.

"Yes, I was dead in love with her; love at first sight, but it was like a boot-black 'oving a queen; or so it seemed to me. For a while I was afeared of her, but as she came to the store pretty often, for one thing or another, I kinder got acquainted with her. At last I made out to go and call on her, and she treated me so nicely, that I went agin, and agin, till at last it got to be the regular thing.

"At this time, I was gettin' to worship her more and more, and one night I couldn't stand it any longer, so I just up and told her—well, the old story. You probably know what it was."

"Well,—er—yes," said the doctor.

"Instead of screamin' or runnin' off, as I half thought she would, she simply told me she had loved me, too, ever since she had known me.

"Well, sir, the next few weeks was jist like heaven to me. All the time I could spare from the store, I spent with Ella, and I was happy as I could be. At last the time came for them to go back to the city. I wanted Ella to marry me right then, and stay with me, but she said she couldn't because her grand father or some relation had left her a lot of money, on condition that she didn't marry until she was twenty-one, and she was only twenty.

"One evenin' I went up to see her. They was goin' away the next day, and I had come up to say good-by. The servant showed me into the parlor, and went to find Ella. I set down back in one corner of the room. The window was open, and there wasn't any lights in the room. Pretty soon I heard her voice and could jist see her comin' up the yard with a young feller I had seen git off the train that mornin'. They came into the door, and I heard what she was a sayin':

"'It's been lots of fun, playin' that simple boy,' she said; 'you really have no cause to be jealous, Vincent, for of course I do not care a thing for Hiv. I have only utilized him for a summer's amusement. I—'

"That's all I waited to hear. I stepped out into the floor before them and tried to speak.

"'Ella!' I cried, 'Ella!' and that was all I could say. I rushed out of the door, and down the road, and—well, I've been wanderin' 'round ever since, tryin' to forget her. I've had some mighty tough times, I tell you, but I guess it won't last much longer, for I—"

He choked and fell back. The doctor put his hand on the poor fellow's heart, and simply said it was all over. The men, moved by that involuntary respect that all men pay to the dead, uncovered their heads and stood grouped about the body.

"Gentlemen," said the doctor, when he had covered the poor, worn body with a blanket from his sulky, "may God have mercy on the soul of that woman. She stands more in need of it than he does."

And his hearers, with one accord, nodded their heads.

—Believe me when I tell you that thrift of time will repay you in after life with a usury of profit beyond your most sanguine dreams and that the waste of it will make you dwindle alike in intellectual and moral stature beyond your darkest reckonings. —*Wm. F. Gladstone.*

The Hero.

"Reuben! Reuben?"

No answer.

"Reuben, my son, it is time to get up." But Reuben did not want to hear. Nor did he feel like getting up. It was very cold. He drew the bed clothes closer about his head, and turned over for another nap. Meanwhile his feeble old mother made the kitchen fire, pumped the water for the kettle, and went out in the ice and snow to feed the half frozen chickens.

'Dolly ought to have been milked an hour ago," she thought. "I wonder what ails Reuben. He gets up later and later every morning."

About an hour afterward, Reuben came slowly down the stairs to breakfast. He looked somewhat ashamed of himself. But he replied, in a sullen tone, when his mother spoke about the late hour for milking, "I think we could do without a cow! It is a great bother to milk her morning and night."

"I wish that I could attend to her, but I cannot do everything," said the mother, with a sigh.

If Reuben had looked up just then, his heart might have reproached him at a sight of his mother's weary and careworn face. She was a widow, and he was her only son. He intended to be a good son, but he did not go the right way to work. He spent many hours in reading about boys who had done remarkable things, such as run away from home, and come back, y ars after ard, with fortunes to surprise their friends, and enable their mothers to live like queens! "That is what I want to do for my mother," he said. But instead of doing he sat and dreamed.

One day he took up a pamphlet that was lying on the school-master's table. In it he saw a story called "The Hero"

"Hello!" he cried. "What is this about? I want to be a hero."

The story was somewhat like this: A few years ago, the traveler through Switzerland might have seen a charming little village now, alas, no longer in existence. A fire broke out one day, and in a few hours the quaint little frame houses were entirely destroyed. The poor peasants ran around ringing their hands and weeping over their lost homes, and the bones of their lost cattle.

One poor man was in greater trouble than his neighbors, even. True, his home and the cows were gone, but so also was his only son, a bright boy of six or seven years old. He wept and refused to hear any words of comfort. He spent the night wondering sorrowfully among the ruins, while his acquaintances had taken refuge in the neighboring villages.

Just as daylight came, however, he heard a well known sound, and looking up he saw his favorate cow leading the heard, and coming directly after them was his bright-eyed little son.

"O, my son! my son!" he cried, "are you really alive?"

"Why, yes, father! When I saw the fire I ran to get our cows away to the pasture lands."

"You are a hero, my boy!" the father exclaimed. But the boy said: "O no! A hero is one who does some wonderful deed. I led the cows away because they were in danger, and I knew it was the right thing to do."

"Ah!" cried the father, "he who does the right thing at the right time is a hero!"

Reuben read the story two or three times, and then he gave a low, long whistle which meant that he was seriously considering something.

"I wonder now if that is true," he thought. "A hero is one who does the right thing at the right time. There are plenty of chances for me to be that kind of a hero!"—*New York Observer.*

Success—An Answer

A young man once asked Baron Rothschild the secret of success, and the Baron looked him over with his keen black eyes and said: "I'd rather tell you the secret of failure. Why they fail seems to be the mystery with most young men. Here is the receipt; One hour a day with your newspaper; one hour a day with your cigarettes, one hour a day with your toilet, and, my word for it, the first position you obtain will be the best you ever will obtain." Three hours a day over and above your routine duties; with less than that Garfield became a classical scholar; with less than that Gladestone has made himself familiar with a dozen professions; with less than that Disraeli became a famous author; with less than that Mr. Arnold, a hurried newspaper man, has given the thought of the world a new impetus in his studies and writings upon the land of Asia; with less than that a thousand business men have become scholars, and a thousand scholars have conducted a business.—*Success.*

A Saloon Keeper's Speech.

The following is a saloon keeper's speech on exhibiting his wares for a prize at a State fair: "Gentlemen, I took this boy out of a Sunday-school only eighteen months ago. His father is dead. The old man voted for license all his days, and left his son for me to practice upon. See! in eighteen months his mother has died of a broken heart, and he has become what you behold—all bloated, dirty an diseased. Good work, don't you think so? Moreover, under a permit for pay, the State is my partner in this business, and should not discredit this beautiful specimen of our joint handiwork."

Oh God! how much longer will the people of any commonwealth vote to have their State a party to the contract in such guiltiness?—*Selected.*

DELILAH EUCHRED.

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