CHATS WITH YOUNG

GOING HOME FOR CHRISTMAS He little knew the sorrow that was

MEN

in his vacant chair, He never guessed they'd miss him, or he'd surely have been there; He couldn't see his mother or the lump that filled her throat, Or the tears that started falling as she read his hasty note;
And he couldn't see his father, sitting

sorrowful and dumb,

Or he never would have written that he thought he couldn't come.

He little knew the gladness that his presence would have made, And the joy it would have given, or never would have stayed. He didn't know how hungry had the

little mother grown
Once again to see her baby and to laim him for her own He didn't guess the meaning of visit Christmas Day Or he never would have written that

he couldn't get away. He couldn't see the fading of the cheeks that once were pink, And the silver in the tresses; and he didn't stop to think

How the years are passing swiftly, and next Christmas it might There would be no home to visit and

no mother dear to see. He didn't think about it-I'll not say he didn't care. He was heedless and forgetful or he'd

surely have been there. Are you going home for Christmas Have you written you'll be

there? Going home to kiss the mother and to show her that you care Going home to greet the father in a way to make him glad?

If you're not I hope there'll never Just sit down and write a letter-it

will make their heartstrings With a tune of perfect gladness-if you'll tell them that you'll

come.

STAMINA AND STABILITY

Christmas appeals to young men for stamina and stability. Christ was faithful to the end in poverty, privation and pain. He deliberately hose self denial and suffering for His portion. He persevered in narrow way all His life. He died as a malefactor nailed to a cross. And with a great longing He had desired the day of His agony. He expected when He was lifted up, He would draw all hearts to Him.

Young men should have certain rules for their conduct. They should decide on them in times of peace. Then, when temptation comes, they would have these principles to go by. Certain things they should deter-

to do. Certain things they should resolve not to do. And then, notwithstanding passion, or the pride of life, or covetousness, they would stand firm in righteousness.

Without principles, they cannot go far with safety.

Now is the time to draw up a list "This I will do. This I will not do. Then for the practice of the precepts or principles. Then for persever-Then for firmness in virtue, called stability.

A young man should keep a watch over his eyes, his hands, his imagination, his will, his memory. He should offer himself, his soul, his mind, his body, to the service of Gcd. take the means to be good.

With modest eyes, a clean mind, innocent hands, respect for women for the Blessed Virgin's sake and his own mother's sake, and reverence for the life-giving power, he will shun the occasions of sin.

He will fill his memory with bright thoughts, he will train his lips to utter frequent ejaculatory prayers like "My Jesus, mercy!" he will dis-cipline his heart to fair love for what is noble, and so he will have the Christian spirit which is the Christmas spirit spread over all the year. O how fine are the young men of fixed principles of virtue, strong in the love of Christ, strong in the practice of good works !- Catholic Colum-

GOING HOME FOR XMAS

"So you're going home for Christ-as," remarked the elderly gentleman to a young man who sat with him in a Pullman parlor car, rushing along at the rate of forty miles an

"Yes, sir," answered the young man, "I am. It was hard to get off just now and I could not well spare the expense of the long journey; but mother looks for me at this time and I just had to come for her sake.'

"Well done, my boy," commented the other traveler. "You'll not regret the time given and the money expended to please your mother, after she's gone. Instead, you'll look back at these times and you'll be glad, all the way through, that you put yourself out to give her happi-

He looked out of the window for a moment, but he did not see the houses, nor the woods, the fields and

the trees that were flying by.
"One of the regrets of my life," continued the elderly gentleman sadly, "is that when I was grown up but was still at home, I did not try to make Christmas happy for father and mother, but spent my energies in that direction on strangers.

"Dear, dear mother, I can see her now, and the look of pain that came

to her face one Christmas morn when there was no present to speak of for her but there was a costly for some one else, who proved unworthy of affection, and when I announced that I was to take my Christmas dinner away from home. He turned away hastily, drew a long breath, and pretended to be in-

tently regarding the flying scenery.

"Another poignant regret of mine, that comes back every year at this season, is that, when I finally left home to make my way in the world, I did not write to the home folk regularly, not even at Christmas. I excused myself to my conscience by saying that I was too busy. But I was never too busy to do anything that I wanted to do with all my heart. My neglect hastened my mother's end. She did not die suddenly, but drooped, and failed, and pined away

like a flower. Dear heart, how many things have I done to atone for my ill-treatment of you," the old man almost whispered, as if talking to some unseen "How many letters have written, how many visits have I made, how many presents have I

sent, out of memory of you !"

He turned to the window again and looked out a long time. The young man beside him was silent, respecting the sacred feelings of his fellow traveler, who was unknown to him but who was yet a brother to him by the bond of common ties and common memories.

There was one thing about me however," went on the gray-haired passenger, "that comforted my nother, even while my coldness and carelessness distressed her. knew that I kept myself morally clean and that at Christmas I never failed to go to Holy Communion. I had my faults, like all young men, but she had grounded one principle into the very fibre of my being—to keep alive Faith by the reception of the Sacraments. I owe that to her more come a time you'll wish you than to my father, my teacher, or my had. poyhood. She trained me in religion. She guarded me from bad com-She chose my books. She did everything, by word and example. that a good mother could do to bring her son up right, and no doubt made me the subject of many a prayer and the beneficiary of many an alms And I thank God now, every day and many times a day, that I think responded to her care and never asked. broke the habit of regular Confession and Communion. That's the royal road to soul safety for a young man, I know. I've been through it all.

'So, when Christmas comes around like to tell young men the glad tidings of the way to spend it right. If your mother is living, I say to them, buy her present first, next to the Christ-Child's own. If you're away from her, see that she gets a lock good long letter from you on Christ-And whether at home or away, go to Holy Communion on that day, in accordance with her wish.
"Here's my station," he exclaimed

and I must go. Good bye. It's been a pleasure to talk to you. Merry Christmas to you and to the good mother whom you are going to see."-L. W. Reilly.

OUR BOYS AND GIRLS

"GOD BLESS US EVERY ONE" God bless us every one," prayed Tiny Tim, Crippled and dwarfed of body, yet so

Of soul, we tiptoe earth to look at him, High towering over all.

He should resolve to be good, and He loved the loveless world, nor the dreamed indeed. That it at best could give to him the while.

But pitying glances, when his only Was but a cheery smile!

And thus he prayed, "God bless us every one!" Enfolding all the creeds within the span Of his child heart; and so, despising

Was nearer saint than man.

I like to fancy God in Paradise Lifting a finger o'er the rhythmic swing Of chiming harp and song, with

eager eyes Turning earthward, listening-The anthem stilled - the angels

leaning there
Above the golden walls—the morning sun
Of Christmas bursting flower-like

with prayer,
God bless us every one!"

-JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY LOOKING FOR SANTA CLAUS

On Christmas, eve towards nightfall. Johnnie Graham and his sister Minnie were curled up on the floor near the kitchen stove, looking over the pictures in an old magazine Little Minnie was explaining the pictures to her brother. The Kansas wind was howling about the house, and driving the snow against the window panes. Without all was darkness, save for the few lights to the west, where lay the village of St. At a table beside the chil-

Halloa!" cried Johnnie, jumping to his feet. "I hear some one a coming." And he rushed eagerly to

dren Mrs. Graham was washing the

the door. The sound of feet shuffling through the snow was followed by an impatient knock. Johnnie threw open the door, and found himself facing a man with a telegram in his hand.

" It's for your father, and immediate." And with these words messenger disappeared into the dark-I hope it is not bad news," said

Mrs. Graham. May I run to the stable, and bring it to papa?" cries Johnnie.

And may I go too, mamma?' asked Minnie Forthwith at the mother's nod the two go tripping through the snow, and soon reach the stable, a stout

structure distant a stone's throw from the house. There are four horses in it-one of them, Witch Winnie, is the finest horse in the West. Mr. Graham is a lover of horses.

Papa, here's a telegram," cries Johnnie And it's marked immediate," adds

Mr. Graham, who had been fondly stroking his favorite racer, hurried from the stall, and tore open the enclosure, His face changed as he

read these words: " Topeka, Kansas. "Your sister is dying and calls for you—not an hour to spare.

JOHN TALBOT."

"Is it something bad, papa?" asks Minnie, catching her father's right hand. While Johnnie, saying nothing, but looking no less sympathetic, takes the other.

"Yes, your aunt is very sick, and I have just about three-quarters of an hour to get ready and take the train. Come, little ones, we must tell mother at once.'

Surely it never rains but it pours," exclaimed Mrs. Graham on hearing the news. "Yesterday poor John was called away to the side of his dving mother in Kansas City. John was their man of all work, a steady, faithful young fellow, who after his love for each and every one

and soul to the horses. "I don't like to leave you alone on night, my dear, "but especially on Christ Graham. mas night."

of the Grahams, was devoted heart

But you must go to Annie's side and besides I'm not afraid. Everything is secure. We've lived here now for over two years, and nothing has gone wrong. And, papa, if you go, do you

think Santa Claus will come?' asked Johnnie anxiously. "Why, of course. I've sent him word that I've put the Christmas tree in the hay loft, so that he won't

make the mistake of coming to our house. Tomorrow when you and Minnie wake up you may run over to the stable, and you'll find out that Santa Claus can get through and you'll find out the stoutest door in Kansas, even though it has the strongest kind of And, papa," said Minnie, " what

time does Santa Claus come ?" Oh, about twelve o'clock. Half an hour later Mr. Graham was kissing them all farewell. Papa, may I keep the key of the

stable?" asked Johnnie. Here it is; don't lose it, my little man."

And may we go over and see Witch Winnie just once more to-night, papa?" chimed in Minnie. Of course. Well, good bye, dear, and God bless you."

Johnnie had been sleeping for some hours in his little cot when Minnie tiptoed into the room. Johnnie," she whispered at his

'Johnnie," she whispered again.
'What's the matter? Is it Christ-

O Johnnie," she continued as 11 o'clock."

"I want to go to sleep. Go away,' said the brother, lying down again." "But wouldn't you like to see

Santa Claus?"
"What!" cried the lad leaping out of his bed.

You know, papa said he would come about midnight. I haven't been able to sleep for thinking of it. Let us go over to the stable, and keep perfectly quiet, and maybe we

shall see him.' We dare not go," said Johnnie. Yes, we may go," answered nnie. "Don't you remember that Minnie. asked papa to go over and see Witch Winnie tonight?'

That's so." A few minutes later two little forms glided over the snow, unlocked figure came a sweet tinkling Christthe door, and slipped into the stable. Shall we leave the door open for Santa Claus?" asked Johnnie.

I think not," Minnie answered. It might hurt his feelings." John-Ooooh! It's dark in here

I'm afraid." matches, dear, and we can light the selves and were extended as though tandles, if we wish. But then Santa they would enfold the whole world Claus might see that you and I were watching for him, and then maybe he would be displeased. Come, let us get in Witch Winnie's stall, and climb into the manger. She'll be company for us."

Witch Winnie gave a little neigh of joy when she felt the hands of her two dearest little friends caress ing her. Then there was an unbroken silence.
"One minute passed — though

Johnnie thought it an hour-when a stealthy step was heard without. He's coming!" cried Minnie, breathing quickly. The steps ceased at the door ; then

there came a low whistle. At the sound Witch Winnie gave another neigh of joy.
"Why, even our horse is glad that Santa Claus is coming," whispered Johnnie.

Sh !" hissed Minnie. For a minute or two there was a full speed.

"God b I think I'll go and help Santa,"

Maybe he's whispered Johnnie. ot used to that kind of a lock." He was about to leap from the anger to carry out his purpose hen the lock turned, the door when the lock opened, and in the light afforded by a lantern in his hand they saw a

nan standing in the doorway. He was wrapped in a heavy coat encrusted with snow—and so far resembled the pictures of Santa Claus. wore a beard, too-but it was There was no pack upon his shoulders, no smile on his face. one hand was a lantern, in the other

did not look at all jolly. Johnnie's heart sank. In fact, he began to doubt whether it was Santa

The man stood still for a moment. and then whistled as before. Witch Winnie answered by low, joyful neigh.

"Ah, there she is," muttered the man under his breath. Johnnie could stand it no longer. Halloa, Santy Claus!" he cried

in nervous tones. The man gave a start, and then, raising his pistol at full cock, threw the glare of the lantern full upon Witch Winnie and the two little

It was a pretty picture; the mare standing with her superb head eagerly towards the newcomer, Minnie clasping her on one side, and Johnnie on the other, both of them looking fearlessly at the man with the cocked pistol. Aren't you Santa Claus?" cried

Minnie. The stranger lowered his pistol, and advanced

Yes, my little ones," he said, " I am Santa Claus."
"I knew it!" cried Johnnie.
"Even Witch Winnie knows it. See how glad she is to see you! she looks at you just the same as she looks at papa. Oh, I'm awful glad to see you, Santy. But where is your pack ?'

It's outside. Do you little ones expect any presents?" Of course we do," answered, Minnie. "This little boy is Johnnie, and I am Minnie. Papa told us you were coming tonight, so we stole

over to see you come in."
"Well, little ones," said Santa Claus in a rather stern voice, "it's against my rules to allow any one to see me at work. Now, if you want to get a lot of the very nicest Christmas presents, you must make me a All right, Santy Claus." cried

You must go right back to the house, and go to sleep, and not say another word till sunrise tomorrow. Now, do you promise?"
"Cross my heart," cried the boy.

"And so shall I promise," added Minnie, "but first, dear Santa Claus, want you to do me a favor. told us that you came in place of the Infant Jesus. Is that so?" 'Y ves." said Santa Claus, cough ing uneasily, and putting away his

pistol as though he were ashamed of Well, we know how much you must love the little Infant, and thought that you would like to take a look at the crib which papa fixed up for us. There are twenty candles, and the little Infant is

lovely. Come on, Santa Claus, here's my hand." Santa Claus shivered as the child put her confiding hand in his. He was in a great hurry; but a little child led him, led him to the other

number of colored candles, revealing bury, had stuck his staff of dry haw a beautiful wax figure of the Child thorn into the soil, commanding it visible. Jesus lying with folded arms upon a small square platform hardly more This the staff straightway did, and

than an inch in thickness.

"Auntie Jane was over in Paris," explained Minnie, "and she bought this for us. Isn't it sweet?"

" It is," said the man, upon whose brow a faint moisture had broken " Now, Santa Claus, I know you

want to kneel down and pray. Johnnie and I always do." Santa Claus knelt. He bowed his head, and did not see what Minnie was doing. Suddenly he gave a start, and looking up saw Minnie sinking to her knees, while from the little platform which supported the mas melody. It was Adams' Noel

and he shivered again, and the moisture upon his forehead gathered into beads as he listened to the sweetly sad strains. "Look," whispered Minnie.
Suddenly the waxen Infant opened its sweet blue eyes, while the tiny, Sh!" cried Minnie. "I have sweet, waxen arms uncrossed themselves and were extended as though

> in their warm, loving embrace.
> "Isn't it beautiful?" whispered Johnnie in a tone that was a prayer. Then the arms slowly folded again, and the sweet blue eyes were again curtained by the lovely lids. Jesus was asleep. After a moment's pause the tinkle of the Adeste

'Let us sing for Santa Claus,' whispered Johnnie. At the word both broke out into the glad notes of the Christmas that she had nothing to give to the hymn, and sang with the sweetness Babe to Whom kings brought wealth made abundantly plain the sin

Fideles made the silence lovely

the grand manner of a living faith. an offering; he was done with it.

fant ?" asked Minnie.

distance as of a horse galloping at

God blass you-you-you-dar lings; God bless you, and forgive

With the last words he was rush ing for the door, where he disap peared as though he had not been, while nearer, louder, clearer came the tramping of the horse. The children hurried to the door

and looked in vain for a sight of Santa Claus. Even as they straining their eyes into the darkness there dashed up a horseman upon foaming charger. Why it's papa !" cried Minnie. "Merry Christmas, papa, and we've seen Santa Claus, and he ran

away when he heard you coming.

Witch Winnie all right? cried Mr. Graham jumping from the horse. Sure!" answered Johnnie, and supplemented by Minnie, he pro-ceeded to tell of their night's adventures. Mr. Graham listened with

his features under a forced restraint. It's too bad, papa, that you frightened Santy away; he didn't bring one Christmas present yet,' said Minnie when Johnnie had concluded his account.

Yes, he did; come up, my little ones, and see." And they went up and saw. It was the finest Christmas tree in Kansas, and every gift that Minnie and Johnnie could desire was there.

Now, my little darlings, let us go down to the crib, and thank the little Infant." And they went down, and kneeling the little Infant-Minnie and Johnnie for their beautiful Christmas gifts, and their father for the safety of Witch Winnie from the clutches of her former groom, had forged two telegrams, who had entered the stable as a horse-thief,

had remained in it as Santa Claus, and left it touched and softened and repentant through the sweet visions of innocence and love which the Infant Jesus had there vouchsafed him.—Rev. Francis J. Finn, S. J.

CHRISTMAS LEGENDS

All around the season of the Coming of Love as a little Child there have sprung legends and beliefs, like blossoms in a gracious clime, which testify with subtlety to depth of the appeal of the birth of Christ. Here divinely spiritual symbolism and there sweet human tenderness and pathos appear and, blended, they evidence the world's belief that He was both Son of Man

An Irish legend tells us that, on Christmas evo, the Christ-Child wanders out in the darkness and the peasants still lighted candles in their windows to guide the sacred little feet, that they may not stumble on their way their homes. And in Hungary the people go yet further in their tenderness for the Child; they spread feasts and leave their doors open that He may enter at His will, while throughout Christendom there is a belief that no evil can touch any

child who is born on Christmas eve. The legend which tells how the very hay which lined the manger in which the Holy Babe was laid put forth living red blossoms at Mohammedan invasion of the Holy mid winter at the touch of the Babe's Land, and there it is preserved in a body could only have arisen from belief in the renewal of life through

the Lord of Life. It is not so many centuries ago since there was that holy thorn at Glatsonbury which blossomed every Christmas, and, so ran the legend, had done ever since St. Joseph of side of the stable into a vacant stall.

Striking a match, Minnie lighted a

Striking a match, Minnie lighted a

Striking a match, Minnie lighted a to put forth leaves and blossoms thereby was the king converted to the Christian faith, the faith which

preached life from death. The holy thorn at Glatsonbury flourished during the centuries until the civil wars. During those it was uprooted; but several persons had had trees growing from cuttings from the original tree, and those con tinued to bloom at the Christ season just as their parent, which had grown from St. Joseph's staff, had bloomed.

And about the middle of the eighteenth century it was recorded in the Gentleman's Magazine how the famous holy thorn would not deign to recognize the new style calendar, which had then come into force, but would persist in blossoming as of old on old Christmas day!

certainly meant more to the common ople than merely a time of feasting and revelry, for giving and receiving; it had been also a season for holy ob-servances, for they refused to go to Church on New Christmas day, the holy thorn not being then in blossom. So serious became the trouble that the clergy found it prudent to announce that Old Christmas day should also be kept sacred as before.

Another of these spiritual parables is the legend of the Christmas rose, and it tells how good things, fit for giving, spring up ready to the hand which earnestly desires to give to the Child. It is said that a certain maiden of Bethlehem was so poor Before they had ended Santa Claus threw his pistol before the shrine as an offering; he was done with it.

her, saying: "Look at thy feet, beneath the snow," and lo! on obeying, the maiden found that a new flower

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and, indeed, its half-opened cups are like chalices of love, and its fully spread petals are like a happy innocence, fit symbols for the gifts for

the Babe of spotless innocence, Whose heart was the vessel of love. There are several exceedingly touching legends concerning bells, which are heard ringing from buried cities and villages at this season. One belongs to a city near Raleigh, in Nottinghamshire, England, and the story runs that once, where there is now but a valley, there was a village which, with every trace of life and habitation, had been swallowed by an earthquake; but ever since, at Christmas the bells of the old buried church are heard to ring as of old.

A similar legend comes from the Netherlands. It is said that the city of Been was notorious for its black and shameless sins, as well as churches had been frightened by the renowned for its beauty and magnificence. To the Sodom of the middle not teach a truth they believed to be ages came our Saviour on one anniversary of His birth, and went as a ics he was not afraid to teach the beggar from door to door, but not axioms. In every department of secone in all that Christmas keeping ular knowledge they did not hesitate city gave the Master of their abun- to begin dogmatically. In this case dance. Sin he saw rampant on every side, but not a trace of Christmas bounty and good will, and he called | child what they held to be true? to the sea, which, as of old, obeyed His voice, and Been, the city of sin, was buried deep, clean out of sight beneath the waves. But ever at Christmas up from beneath the covering waters comes the sweet of church bells buried in calling It is a legend which appears Been. tell in parable that nothing which ever belonged to the Christ, and was dedicated to His Service, is ever wholly lost from Him and alienated from service; that ever and beauty and compelling sweetness from the depths through all rises

seeming ruin. Tradition declares that within the stone manger there was another one of wood, and that the stone cradle in the Chapel of the Nativity is, indeed, the outer manger. Splendid is that humble stone trough now with white marble, softly rich with costly draperies, and radiant with a silver star which is surrounded by sixteen lamps ever a lit. But yet more glorious is the wooden manger at Rome, the veritable manger in which the Christ-Child lay. It was removed to Rome in the seventh century, during the strong brazen chest, from which it is brought forth on Christmas days, when it is placed on the High Altar It is mounted upon a stand of silver which is inlaid with gold and gems, and the shrine in which it rests is of purest rock crystal. In the days in which this was accomplished men, whatsoever may have been their shortcomings in gave magnificently to the Church

Tradition says that the hour of the Babe's birth was the hour of midnight, and legend adds that from then until dawn cocks crow. In Ireland it held that whose looks into a mirror on this eve will see the devil or Judas Iscariot looking over his shoulder, surely sufficient to drive the hardiest soul to a thought of the innocent Babe .- Buffalo Echo.

THE CHURCH AND THE CRADLE

Principle Ritchie of Nottingham College, speaking at a Nonconformist gathering some time ago, at Norwich Conn., says the Catholic Times, paid a high tribute to Catholic teaching In those days the anniversary of and practice. Discussing the questhe advent of the Christ-Child had tion of child life, the problem of the empty cradle, and the retention of the young in Church membership and service, this leading Free Church minister confessed that Protestant ism had a great deal of leeway to make up in comparison with Cathol

Remarking on the large number of childless homes to be found in the Protestant churches, he said it was a fact almost oppressive in its signifi cance that so many of these homes were childless. . . . Now, he was speaking to Protestants. Generally this indictment was not true of Cath olics, not half so true. Some of them might have read lately a start ling article in "Hibbert." hymn, and sang with the sweetness of fresh and touching voices, and in from afar, and, as she stood, longing fact that if the same ratio of decline and mourning, an angel appeared to her, saying: "Look at thy feet, be and the same ratio of increase con continued in the Protestant churches tinued in the Catholic Church, the governing force in this country after Would you like to kiss the In-had miraculously sprung up and not many decades had passed would blossomed at her needs. Ever since be Catholic. This advantage to Cath not many decades had passed would "I dare not," he answered hoarsely.

There was a faint sound in the flower is to be found at this season; through the conversion of adults; it

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was being done through the cradle. Here was a great and grave matter They knew how the Catholic Church The question was, were the Protestant churches to face it and face it wisely? It was a question that could not be discussed except incidentally in pulpits, cause then more mischief would be done than good. He was not unmindful that in part this was an economic problem, a problem even of housing and landlords. In only too many districts parants with more than three children "need not apply. But at the bottom it was a moral problem. It was a big question, the sure sign of a decadent civiliza-

In his reply on the discussion, Principal Ritchie made another admission. In regard to religious teaching, he said he feared the Free word "dogmatic." Why should they true? When he taught mathemat-Sin he saw rampant on every of religion why should they not. under fitting forms, teach to the

IRISH LASS LOST HER LEG,

BUT NOT HER WIT "Irish wit cannot be quenched even by misfortune," said Col. William Crawford Gorgas, assistant surgeon general of the United States arm and a case that particularly impres-

ed me is the following: 'One morning at the hospital I took off an Irish lassie's leg above again something of their inherent the knee. She had been in a street car accident. It was, of course, a very great loss to her, for she was a factory girl and it meant that she would be laid up for a long time, and a crutch for all time.

'After she came out of the ether and was herself, she asked what had been done to her. The young nurse turned and looked at me, waiting for me to tell the girl. I broke the news as gently as I could, and added: 'You're all right, only there won't

be any more dancing for you, my girl. 'Shure, docther,' she replied, gaily and quickly, although her blue eyes were filled with tears, 'but I'll be just right now to take in all th'

hops.' "-Malott's Magazine,

Gerald de Lacey's

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