

I Made a Shirt!

More years ago than I shall name,
I sought to win a good wife's fame,
I knew not how—but all the same
I made a shirt.

I cut, I stitched, with many a tear;
Followed it out, both front and rear;
I carved the arm-holes wide, for fear
They wouldn't fit.

John's neck I measured to be true,
The band must fit—that much I knew,
I'd heard so oft. All else I drew
And puckered in.

At last 'twas done. A work of art,
Complete, I hoped in every part.
"Come, John," I called with quaking heart,
"Try on your shirt."

I must confess it bulged somewhat
In places where I thought 't should not,
But John, the brute, yelled out, "Great Scott,
Is this a tent?"

And such behavior, language, well!
He uttered things I'll never tell.
I may forget them when I dwell
In higher spheres.

O woman of the present day,
To you's inscribed this little lay;
You little know the man you pay
Your homage to.

If his "true inwardness" you'd know,
Have him your idols overthrow,
And sentiments to four winds blow,
Make him a shirt!

—Amy Hamilton.

THE SISTERS

But they had no sooner alighted and shaken out their skirts than down from the terrace stepped Mr. Westmoreland, the first and most substantial instalment of expected cavaliers, to assist the major to convey his party to the field. Mr. Westmoreland was unusually alert and animated, and he pounced upon Eleanor, after hurriedly saluting the other ladies, with such an open preference that Mrs. Duff-Scott re-adjusted her schemes upon the spot. If the young man insisted upon choosing the youngest instead of the middle one, he must be allowed to do so, was the matron's prompt conclusion. She would rather have begun at the top and worked downwards, leaving fair Eleanor to be disposed of after the elder sisters were settled; but she recognized the wisdom of taking the goods the gods provided as she could get them.

"I do declare," said Mr. Westmoreland, looking straight at the girl's face, framed in the soft little bonnet, and the pale blue disc of her parasol, "I do declare I never saw anybody look so—"

"Come, come," interrupted the chaperon, "I don't allow speeches of that sort." She spoke quite sharply, this astute diplomatist, so that the young man who was used to being allowed, and even encouraged, to make speeches of that sort, experienced the strange sensation of being snubbed, and was half inclined to be sulky over it; and at the same moment she quietly seconded his manoeuvres to get to Eleanor's side, and took care that he had his chances generally for the rest of the day.

Meanwhile Mrs. Duff-Scott, in the care of Mr. Westmoreland, awaited their return on the lawn, slowly sweeping to and fro, with her train rustling over the grass behind her, and feeling that she had never enjoyed a Cup Day half so much before. Her girls were admired to her heart's content, and she literally basked in the radiance of their success. She regarded them, indeed, with an enthusiasm of affection and interest that her husband felt to be the most substantial safeguard against promiscuous philanthropy that had yet been afforded her. How hungrily she had longed for children of her own! How she had envied other women their grown-up daughters!—always with the sense that hers would have been, like her cabinets of china, so much more choice and so much better "arranged" than theirs. And now that she had discovered these charming orphans, who had beauty, and breeding, and culture, and not a relative or connection in the world, she did not know how to restrain the extravagance of her satisfaction. As she rustled majestically up and down the lawn, with one fair girl on one side of her and one on the other, while men and women turned at every step to stare at them, her heart swelled and throbbed with the long-latent pride of motherhood, and a sense that she had at length stumbled upon the particular "specimen" that she had all her life been hunting for. The only drawback to her enjoyment in them was the consciousness that, though they were nobody else's, they were not altogether hers. She would have given half her fortune to be able to buy them, as she would buy three bits of precious crockery, for her absolute possession, body and soul—to dress, to manage, to marry as she liked.

The major kept Elizabeth walking about with him until the hour approached for the Maiden Plate race and luncheon. And when at last they joined their party they found that Mrs. Duff-Scott was already getting together her guests for the latter entertainment. She was seated on a bench, between Eleanor and Patty, and before her stood a group of men, in various attitudes of animation and repose, conspicuous amongst whom was the tall form of Mr. Kingscote Yelverton. Elizabeth had only had distant glimpses of him during the four weeks that had passed since he was introduced to her; her chaperon not having seemed inclined to cultivate his acquaintance—probably because she had not sought it for herself; but now the girl saw, with a quickened pulse, that the happiness of speaking to him again was in store for her. He seemed to be aware of her approach as soon as she was within sight, and lifted his head and turned to watch her—still sustaining his dialogue with Mrs. Duff-Scott, who had singled him out to talk to; and Elizabeth, feeling his eyes upon her, had a sudden sense of discomfort in her beautiful dress and changed surroundings. She was sure that he would draw comparisons, and she did not feel herself elevated by the new dignities that had been conferred upon her.

Coming up to her party, she was introduced to several strangers—amongst others, to the husband Mrs. Duff-Scott had selected for her, a portly widower with a grey beard—and in the conversation that ensued she quite ignored the only person in the group whose presence she was distinctly conscious. She neither looked at him nor spoke to him, though aware of every word and glance and movement of his until presently they were all standing upon the slope of grass connecting the terrace with the lawn to see the first race as best they could, and then she found herself once more

by his side. And not only by his side, but, as those who could not gain a footing upon the stand congregated upon the terrace elevation, gradually wedged against him almost as tightly as on the former memorable occasion. Below them stood Mrs. Duff-Scott, protected by Mr. Westmoreland, and Patty and Eleanor, guarded vigilantly by the little major. It was Mr. Yelverton himself who had quietly seen and seized upon his chance of renewing his original relations with Elizabeth.

"Miss King," he said, in a low tone of authority, "take my arm—it will steady you."

She took his arm, and felt at once that she was in shelter and safety. Strong as she was, her impulse to lean on him was almost irresistible.

"Now, give me your parasol," he said. The noonday sun was pouring down, but at this critical juncture the convenience of the greatest number had to be considered, and unselfish women were patiently exposing their best complexions to destruction. Of course Elizabeth declared she should do very well until the race was over. Whereupon her companion took her parasol gently from her hand, opened it, and held it—as from his great height he was able to do—so that it shaded her without incommoding other people. And so they stood, in silent enjoyment, both thinking of where and how something like this—and yet something so different—had happened before, but neither of them saying a word to betray their thoughts, until the first race was run, and the excitement of it cooled down, and they were summoned by Mrs. Duff-Scott to follow her to the carriage-paddock for lunch.

Down on the lawn again they sauntered side by side, finding themselves *te-a-tete* without listeners for the first time since they had been introduced to each other. Elizabeth made a tremendous effort to ignore the secret intimacy between them. "It is a lovely day, is it not?" she lightly remarked, from under the dome of her straw-colored parasol. "I don't think there has been such a fine Cup Day for years."

"Lovely," he assented. "Have you often been here before?"

"I—Oh, no. I have never been here before."

He was silent a moment, while he looked intently at what he could see of her. She had no air of rustic inexperience of the world today. "You are beginning to understand crowds," he said.

"Yes—I am, a little." Then, glancing up at him, she said, "How does this crowd affect you? Do you find it all interesting?"

He met her eyes gravely, and then lifted his own towards the hill above the grand stand, which was now literally black with human beings, like a swarming ant-hill.

"I think it might be more interesting yonder," he said; and then added, after a pause—"if we could be there."

Eleanor was walking just in front of them, chatting airily with her admirer, Mr. Westmoreland, who certainly was making no secret of his admiration; and she turned round when she heard this. "Ah, Mr. Yelverton," she said, lightly, "you are very disappointing. You don't care for our great Flemington show. You are not a connoisseur in ladies' dresses, I suppose."

"I know when a lady's dress is becoming, Miss Eleanor," he promptly responded, with a smile and bow. At which she blushed and laughed, and turned her back again. For the moment he was a man like other men who enjoy social success and favor—ready to be all things to all women; but it was only for a moment. Elizabeth noted, with a swelling sense of pride and pleasure, that he was not like that to her.

"I am out of my element in an affair of this kind," he said, in the undertone that was meant for her ear alone.

"What is your element?"

"Perhaps I oughtn't to call it my element—the groove I have got into—my 'walk of life,' so to speak."

"I'll tell you about it some day—if I ever get the chance. I can't here."

"I should like to know. And I can guess a little. You don't spend life wholly in getting pleasure for yourself—you help others."

"What makes you think that?"

"I am sure of it."

"Thank you."

Elizabeth blushed, and could not think of a remark to make, though she tried hard.

"Just at present," he went on, "I am on pleasure bent entirely. I am taking several months' holiday—doing nothing but amusing myself."

"A holiday implies work."

"I suppose we all work, more or less."

"Oh, no, we don't. Not voluntarily—not disinterestedly—in that way."

"You mean in my way?"

"Yes."

"Ah, I see that Westmoreland has been romancing."

"I have not heard a word from Mr. Westmoreland—he has never spoken of you to me."

"Who then?"

"Nobody."

"These are your own conjectures?"

Later in the afternoon, when the great Cup race and all the excitement of the day was over, Mrs. Duff-Scott gathered her brood together and took leave of her casual male guests. "Good-bye, Mr. Yelverton," she said cordially, when his turn came to bid her adieu; "you will come and see me at my own house, I hope?"

Elizabeth looked up at him when she heard the words. She could not help it—she did not know what she did. And in her eyes he read the invitation that he declared gravely he would do himself the honor to accept.

CHAPTER XXII.

CROSS PURPOSES.

Paul, who was a good talker, was giving his companion an animated account of the French plays going on at one of the theatres just then—which she had not yet been to see—and describing with great warmth the graceful and finished acting of charming Madame Andree, when he was suddenly aware of Patty King passing close beside him. Patty was walking at her chaperon's side, with her head erect, and her white parasol, with her shoulder, held well back over her diaphanous dress. He caught his breath at sight of her, looking so different from her ordinary self, and was about to raise his hat, when—by his deep dismay and surprise—she swept haughtily past him, meeting his eyes fairly, with a cold disdain, but making no sign of recognition.

his teeth, and walked on silently, not seeing where he went. For a moment he felt stunned with the shock. Then he was brought to himself by a harsh laugh from Mrs. Aarons. "Dear men," said she, in a high tone, "the Miss Kings have become so grand that we are beneath their notice. You and I are not good enough for them now, Mr. Brion. We must hide our diminished heads."

"I see," he assented, with savage quietness. "Very well. I am quite ready to hide mine."

Meanwhile Patty, at the farther end of the lawn, was overwhelmed with remorse for what she had done. At the first sight of him, in close intercourse with that woman who, Mrs. Duff-Scott again reminded her, was not "nice"—who, though a wife and mother, liked men to "dangle" round her—she had arraigned and judged and sentenced him with the swift severity of youth, that knows nothing of the complex trials and sufferings which teach older people to bear and forbear with one another. But when it was over, and she had seen his shocked and bewildered face, all her instinctive trust in him revived, and she would have given anything to be able to make reparation for her cruelty. The whole afternoon she was looking for him, hoping for a chance to show him somehow that she did not altogether "mean it," but, though she saw him several times—eating his lunch with Mrs. Aarons under the refreshment shed close by the Duff-Scott carriage, watching Grand Fleuret win the greatest of his half-dozen successive victories from the same point of view as that taken by the Duff-Scott party—he never turned his head again in her direction or seemed to have the faintest consciousness that she was there.

And next day, when no longer in her glorious apparel, but walking quietly home from the library with Eleanor, she met him unexpectedly, face to face, in the Fitzroy Gardens. And then he cut her—dead.

CHAPTER XXIII.

MR. YELVERTON'S MISSION.

On a Thursday evening in the race week—two days after the "Cup," Mrs. Duff-Scott took her girls to the Town Hall to one of a series of concerts that were given at that time by Henri Ketten, the Hungarian pianist, and the Austrian band that had come out to Melbourne to give eclat to the exhibition.

It was a fine, clear night, and the great hall was full when they arrived, notwithstanding the fact that half-a-dozen theatres were open and displaying their most attractive novelties, for music-loving souls are pretty numerous in this part of the world, taking all things into consideration. Australians may not have such an enlightened appreciation of high-class music as, say, the educated Viennese, who live and breathe and have their being in it. There are, indeed, sad instances on record of a great artist, or a choice combination of artists, having appeared in vain for sympathy to the Melbourne public—that is to say, having found not numbers of paying and applauding listeners, but only a select and unrepentant few. But such instances are rare, and to be accounted for as the result, not of indifference, but of inexperience.

The rule is—as I think most of our distinguished musical visitors will testify—that we are a people peculiarly ready to recognize whatever is good that comes to us, and to acknowledge and appreciate it with ungrudging generosity. And so the Austrian band, though it had many critics, never played to a thin audience or to inattentive ears; and no city in Europe (according to his own death-bed testimony) ever offered such intense love of enthusiasm to Ketten's genius as burnt steadily in Melbourne from the moment that he laid his fingers on the keyboard, at the Opera House, until he took his reluctant departure. This, I hasten to explain (lest I should be accused of "blowing"), is not due to any exceptional virtue of discrimination on our part, but to our good fortune in having inherited an enterprising and active intelligence from the brave men who had the courage and energy to make a new country, and to that country being such a land of plenty that those who live in it have easy times and abundant leisure to enjoy themselves.

Mrs. Duff-Scott sailed into the hall, with her girls around her, and many eyes were turned to look at them and to watch their progress to their seats. By this time "the pretty Miss Kings" had become well known and much talked about, and the public interest in what they wore, and what gentlemen were in attendance on them, was apt to be keen on these occasions. To-night the younger girls, with their lovely hair lifted from their white necks and coiled high at the back of their heads, wore picturesque flowered gowns of blue and white stuff, while the elder sister was characteristically dignified in black. And the gentlemen in attendance upon them were Mr. Westmoreland, still devoted to Eleanor, and the portly widower whom Mrs. Duff-Scott had intended for Elizabeth, but who was perversely addicted to Patty. The little party took their places in the body of the hall, in preference to the gallery, and seated themselves in two rows of three—the widower behind Mrs. Duff-Scott, Patty next him behind Eleanor, and Elizabeth behind Mr. Westmoreland. And when the concert began there was an empty chair beside Elizabeth.

By-and-bye, when the overture was at an end—when the sonorous tinkling and trumpeting of the orchestra had ceased, and she was listening, in soft rapture, to Ketten's delicate improvisation, at once echo and prelude, reminiscent of the idea that the band had been elaborating, and prophetic of the beautiful Beethoven sonata that he was thus tenderly approaching, Elizabeth was aware that the empty chair was taken, and knew, without turning her head, by whom. She tried not to blush and feel fluttered—she was too old, she told herself, for that nonsense—but for half a minute or so it was an effort to control these sentimental tendencies. He laid his light overcoat over the back of his chair, and sat down quietly. Mrs. Duff-Scott looked over her shoulder, and gave him a pleasant nod. Mr. Westmoreland said, "Hullo! Got back again?" And then Elizabeth felt sufficiently composed to turn and hold out her hand, which he took in a strong clasp that was not far removed from a squeeze. They did not speak to each other, nor did they look at each other, though Mr. Yelverton was speedily informed of all the details of his neighbor's appearance, and she took no time to ascertain that he looked

particularly handsome in his evening dress (but she always thought him handsome; big nose, leather cheeks, red moustache and all), and that his well-cut coat and trousers were not in their first freshness. Then the concert went on as before—but not as before—and they sat side by side and listened. Elizabeth's programme lay on her knee, and he took it up to study it, and laid it lightly on her knee again. Presently she pointed to one and another of the selections on the list, about which she had her own strong musical feelings, and he looked down at them and nodded, understanding what she meant. And again they sat back in their chairs and gazed serenely at the stage under the great organ, at Herr Wildner cutting the air with his baton, or at poor Ketten, with his long, white solemn face, sitting at the piano in a bower of votive wreaths and bouquets, raining his magic finger-tips like a sparkling cascade upon the key-board, and wringing the skin of his forehead up and down. But they had no audible conversation throughout the whole performance. When the usual interval occurred for the relaxation and refreshment of the performers and their audience, Mr. Westmoreland turned round with his elbow over the back of his chair, and appropriated an opportunity to which they had been secretly looking forward. "So you've got back?" he remarked for the second time. "I thought you were going to make a round of the country?"

"I shall do it in instalments," replied Mr. Yelverton.

"You won't have time to do much that way, if you are going home again next month. Will you?"

"I can extend my time a little, if necessary."

"Can you? Oh, I thought there was some awfully urgent business that you had to go back for—a new coster-monger's theatre to open, or a street Arab's public-house—eh?"

Mr. Westmoreland laughed, as at a good joke that he had got hold of, but Mr. Yelverton was imperturbable. "I have business in Australia just now," he said, "and I'm going to finish that first."

"No," said Mr. Westmoreland, withdrawing his eyes from the contemplation of Eleanor and her aesthetic gown, "he's not a society man. He doesn't go much into clubs, Yelverton. He's one of the richest commoners in Great Britain—give you my word, sir, he's got a princely fortune, all to his own check—and he lets his places and lives in chambers in Piccadilly, and spends nearly all his time when he's at home in the slums and gutters of Whitechapel. He's got a mania for philanthropy, unfortunately. It's an awful pity, for he really would be a good fellow."

At the word "philanthropy," the major made a clandestine grimace to Elizabeth, who composed his face, immediately, seeing that she was not regarding him, but gazing with serious eyes at the narrator of Mr. Yelverton's peculiarities.

"He's been poking into every hole and corner," continued Mr. Westmoreland, "since he came here, overhauling the factory places, and finding out the prices of things, and the land regulations, and I don't know what. He's just been to Sandhurst, to look at the mines—doing a little amateur emigration business, I expect. Seems a strange thing," concluded the young man, thoughtfully, "for a rich swell of his class to be bothering himself about things of that sort."

Mrs. Duff-Scott had been listening attentively, and at this she roused herself and sat up in her chair. "It is the rich who should do it," said she with energy. "And I admire him—I admire him, that he has given up his own selfish ease to help those whose lives are hard and miserable. I believe the squalid wretchedness of places like Whitechapel—though I have never been there—is something dreadful—dreadful! I admire him," she repeated defiantly. "I think it is a pity a few more of us are not like him. I shall talk to him about it. I—I shall see if I can't help him."

This time Elizabeth did look at the major, who was making a feint of putting his handkerchief to his eyes. She smiled at him sweetly, and then she walked over to Mrs. Duff-Scott, put her strong arms round the matron's shoulders, and kissed her fervently.

CHAPTER XXIV.

AN OLD STORY.

Mrs. Duff-Scott's drawing-room, at 9 or 10 o'clock on Friday evening, was a pleasant sight. Very spacious, very voluptuous, in a subdued, majestic, high-toned way; very dim—with splashes of richness—as to walls and ceilings; very glowing and splendid—with folds of velvety darkness—as to window curtains and portieres. The coloring of it was such as required a strong light to show how beautiful it was, but with a proud reserve, and to mark its unostentatious superiority over the glittering salons of the uneducated *nouveau riches*, it was always more or less in a warm and mellow twilight, veiling its sombre magnificence from the vulgar eye. Just now its main compartment was lit by wax candles in archaic candlesticks amongst the flowers and bric-a-brac of an *etager* over the mantelpiece, and by seven shaded and colored lamps, of various artistic devices, judiciously distributed over the abundant table-space so as to suffuse with a soft illumination the occupants of most of the wonderfully stuffed and round chairs and lounges grouped about the floor; and yet the side of the room was decidedly bad for reading in. "It does not light up well," was the consolation of women of Mrs. Duff-Scott's acquaintance, who still clung to pale walls and primary colors and cut-glass chandeliers, either from necessity or choice. "Pooh!" Mrs. Duff-Scott used to retort, hearing of this just criticism; "as if I wanted it to light up!" But she had compromised with her principles in the arrangement of the smaller division of the room, where, between and beyond a pair of vaguely tinted portieres, stood the piano, and all other material appliances for heightening the spiritual enjoyment of musical people. Here she had grudgingly retained the gas-burner of utilitarian Philistinism. It hung down from the ceiling straight over the piano, a circle of gaudy yellow flames, that made the face of every plaque upon the wall to glitter. But the brilliant corona was borne in no gas-fitter's vehicle; its shrine was of dull brass, mediæval and precious, said to have been manufactured, in the first instance, for either papal or imperial purposes—it didn't matter which.

In this little music-room was gathered to-night a bright company of the elect—Herr Wullner and his violin, together with

three other stringed instruments and their human complement. Patty at the piano, Eleanor, Mrs. Duff-Scott, and half-a-dozen more enthusiasts—with a mixed audience around them. In the dim, big room beyond, the major entertained the inartistic, outlawed few who did not care, nor pretend to care, for aught but the sensual comfort of downy chairs and after-dinner chit-chat. And, at the farthest end, in a recess of curtained window that had no lamps about it, sat Elizabeth and Mr. Yelverton, side by side on a low settee—not indifferent to the pathetic wail of the far-distant violins, but finding more entertainment in their own talk than the finest music could have afforded them.

"I had a friend who gave up everything to go and work amongst the London poor—in the usual clerical way, you know, with schools and guilds and all the right and proper things. He used to ask me for money, and insist on my helping him with a lecture or a reading now and then, and I got drawn in. I had always had an idea of doing something—taking a line of some sort—and somehow this got hold of me. I couldn't see all that misery—you've no idea of it, Miss King—"

"I have read of it," she said.

"You would have to see it to realize it in the least. After I saw it I couldn't turn my back and go home and enjoy myself as if nothing had happened. An I had no family to consider. I got drawn in."

"And that is your work?" said Elizabeth.

"I knew it."

"No. My friend talks of 'his work'—a lot of them have 'their work'—it's splendid, too—but they don't allow me to use that word, and I don't want it. What I do is all wrong, they say—not only useless, but mischievous."

"I don't believe it," said Elizabeth.

"Nor I, of course—though they may be right. We can only judge according to our lights. To me, it seems that when things are as bad as possible, a well-meaning person can't make them worse and may make them better. They say 'no,' and argue it all out as plainly as possible. Yet I stick to my view—I go on in my own line. It doesn't interfere with theirs, though they say it does."

"And what is it?" she asked, with her sympathetic eyes.

"Well, you'll hardly understand, for you don't know the class—the lowest deep of all—those who can't be dealt with by the societies—the poor wretches whom nothing will raise, and who are abandoned as hopeless, outside the pale of everything. They are my line."

"Can there be any abandoned as hopeless?"

"Yes. They really are so, you know. Neither religion nor political economy can do anything for them, though efforts are made for the children. Poor, sodden, senseless, vicious lumps of misery, with the last spark of soul bred out of them—a sort of animated garbage that cumbers the ground and makes the air stink—given up as a bad job, and only wanted out of the way—from the first they were on my mind more than all the others. And when I saw them left to rot like that, I felt I might have a free hand."

"And can you succeed where so many have failed?"

"Oh, what I do doesn't involve success or failure. It's outside all that, just as they are. They're only brutes in human shape—hardly human shape either; but I have a feeling for brutes. I love horses and dogs—I can't bear to see things suffer. So that's all I do—just comfort them where I can, in their own way; not the person's way—that's no use. I wouldn't mock them by speaking of religion—I suppose religion, as we know it, has had a large hand in making them what they are; and to go and tell them that God ordained their miserable pariah-dog lot would be rank blasphemy. I leave all that. I don't bother about their souls, because I know they haven't got any; I see their wretched bodies, and to let them go out of the world without ever knowing what it is to be physically comfortable. It eases my conscience, as a man who has never been hungry, except for the pleasure of it."

"And do they blame you for that?"

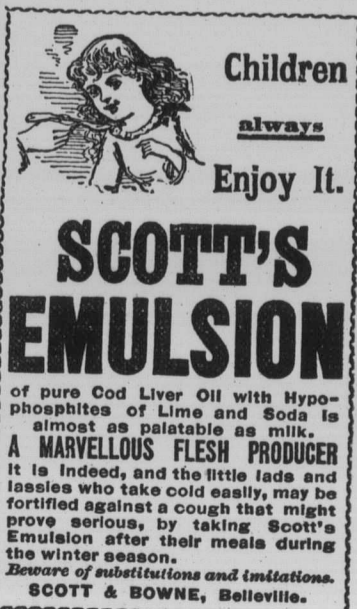
"They say I pauperize them and demoralize them," he answered with a sudden laugh; "that I disorganize the schemes of the legitimate workers—that I outrage every principle of political economy. Well, I do that, certainly. But that I make things worse—that I retard the legitimate workers—I won't believe. 'If I do,' he concluded, "I can't help it."

"No," breathed Elizabeth, softly.

"There's only one thing in which I and the legitimate workers are alike—everybody is alike in that, I suppose—the want of money. Only in the matter of beer and tobacco, what interest I could get on a few hundred pounds! What I could do in the way of filling empty stomachs and easing aches and pains if I had control of large means! What a good word 'means' is, isn't it? We want 'means' for all the ends we seek—no matter what they are."

"I thought," said Elizabeth, "that you were rich. Mr. Westmoreland told us so."

(To be continued.)



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