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THE WEEKLY MIRROR.

Vol. I.]

HALIFAX, FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 1835.

[No. 5.

LITERATURE.

HISTORY OF THE BRITISH COLONIES.

By R. Montgomery Martin, F. S. S. vol. II.—*The West Indies*. London: Cochran & M'Crone.

Concluded.

The pitch supplied by the bituminous lake of Trinidad has been converted to a very extraordinary, though useful purpose.

"The pitch of the lake has been adopted for the improvement of the roads, particularly in the fertile district of Naparima, where it was brought for the purpose, from La Brea. In the wet season the roads at Naparima are almost impassible in those parts where there has been no application of the pitch; but where the pitch has been applied, which is the case for several miles in North Naparima; there is a hard surface formed, which makes transport comparatively easy, both from the support afforded and the little friction of the hardened pitch."

Montserrat supplies us with the following amusing story, which we do not remember to have heard before:

"Montserrat had Irish colonists for its early settlers, and the negroes to this day have the Connaught brogue curiously and ludicrously engrafted on the African jargon. It is said that a Connaught man, on arriving at Montserrat, was, to his astonishment, hailed in vernacular Irish by a negro from one of the first boats, that came along side—'Thunder and turf' exclaimed Pat, 'how long have you been here?' 'Three months,' answered Quashy. 'Three months? and so black already!!! *Hanum a Diaoul,*' says Pat, thinking Quashy a ci-devant countryman, 'I'll not stay among ye;' and in a few hours the Connaught man was on his return, with a white skin, to the Emerald Isle."

Mr. Martin dwells at great length on the advantages that Honduras offers to an emigrant, and strenuously recommends its colonization. The emigration question is too important for us to omit any thing by which it may be elucidated.

"I cannot conclude this Chapter without expressing my regret, that such an important settlement as Honduras, should have been so long neglected at home. It is valuable not only in a political but in a commercial aspect: inasmuch as it opens to our trade new regions and countries, while its rich and fertile lands await only the skillful handiwork of the British emigrant to pour forth the abundance of life. The eloquent annalist of Jamaica, writing within the last two or three years, says, "it is but within the last two or few months that the town of Peten, situated 260 miles west of Balize, at the head of its magnificent river,

has been exposed to speculation, or even to our acquaintance. A road is now open, and a lively intercourse with the British merchants has arisen here. Fleets of Indian pinnaces repair almost weekly to Balize, and return loaded with articles of British manufacture. Peten, formerly the capital of the Izaac Indians, was one of the last conquests of the Spaniards in 1679. It stands on an island in the centre of the extensive freshwater lake Itza, in lat. 16 N., long. 91, 16, W. Within fifty miles of it the enterprising spirit of the British settler has already extended the search for mahogany; and what may not be expected from a people so industrious, so judicious, and so persevering? The Itza is 26 leagues in circumference, and its pure waters, to the depth of 30 fathoms, produce the most excellent fish. The islands of Sepet, Galves, Bixet, and Coju, lie scattered over its surface, and afforded a delicious retreat to 10,000 inhabitants, who form part of the new republic of central America within the spiritual jurisdiction of the Mexican diocese of Yucatan. The fertile soil yields two harvests in the year, producing maize, chieppa pepper, balsam, vanilla, cotton, indigo, cocoa, cochineal, brazil wood, and the most exquisite fruits in wasteful abundance. Several navigable rivers flowing thence are lost in the Great Pacific, and suggest an easy communication with the British limits. Within ten leagues of the shores of the Itza lake, commences the ridge of the Alabaster Mountains, on whose surface glitter in vast profusion the green, the brown, and the variegated jaspers, while the forests are filled with wild and monstrous beasts, the Equus Bifulcus, or Chinese horse, and with tigers and lions of a degenerate breed. Roads diverge in all directions from this favoured spot and afford an easy communication with a free channel for British merchandize to San Antonio, to Chichana, San Benito, Tabasco, and even Campeachy; while throughout the whole country the most stupendous timbers are abundant. The most valuable drugs, balsams, and aromatic plants grow wild; and the achiote, amber, copal, dragon's blood, mastio and analeigo are every where to be gathered."

We shall not enter with our author into an examination of the defects, real or supposed, in our colonial policy; his principle, that "the full benefit of Colonies can only be experienced when their trade approximates as closely as possible to a coasting commerce, freed from fiscal exactions, and legislative decrees," is certainly correct; but its application under present circumstances seems hardly possible.

FRIENDSHIP'S OFFERING.—A respectable melange of prose and poetry, among which John Clare and Barry Cornwall are conspicuous. We copy a dirge, extremely beautiful, and which might well be substituted in public ceremonies for that barbarous stanza—

"Affliction sore long time I bore," &c.

*Strew boughs—strew flowers
Through all the hours,
On you young tomb—
Unblown, unfaded,
Unloved, unknown:
Here beauty sleepeth, beneath a stone;
Once how fair—but now degraded!
Hither she came—alone—alone,
From the South Sea bowers,
Where summer dowers
The world with bloom.
Mingle with music the strange perfume!
Let the tears of the hours
Now fall like rain,
And freshen the flowers
Again, again!
The sweetness they borrow
Shall ne'er be vain,
While human sorrow
Is falling in showers,
That yield no comfort to human pain!*

Description of Sir Walter Scott, by James Hogg.—"Sir Walter Scott was the best formed man I ever saw, and laying his weak limb out of the question, a perfect model of a man for gigantic strength. The muscles of his arm were prodigious. I remember one day, long ago—I think it was at some national dinner in Omon's Hotel—that at a certain time of the night, a number of the heroes differed prodigiously with regard to their various degrees of muscular strength. A general measurement took place around the shoulders and chest, and I as a particular judge in these matters, was fixed on as a measurer and umpire. Scott, who never threw cold water on any fun, submitted to be measured with the rest. He measured most round the chest, and to their great chagrin, I was next to him, and very little short. But when I came to examine his arms, Sir Walter had double the muscular power of mine, and very nearly so of every man's who was there; I declare that from the elbow to the shoulders, they felt as if they had the strength of an ox.—*Fraser's Magazine*.

NATURAL HISTORY.—Famboldt says, that naturalists already know 68,000 species of plants; 44,000 insects; 2,500 fishes; 700 reptiles; 4,000 birds; and 500 mammiferæ. In Europe alone there exist nearly 80 mammiferæ, 400 birds, and 30 reptiles.

MISCELLANEOUS.

FISHING ON THE GRAND BANK.

On crossing the banks of Newfoundland, the ship was hove to, for the purpose of sounding; and the quarter-master having tied a baited hook to the deep-sea lead, a noble cod was drawn to the surface, from the depth of ninety fathoms. Upon this hint, the captain, very considerably, agreed to lie by for an hour or two; and some fifty lines being put over, the decks were soon covered, fore and aft, with such a display of fish as Billingsgate has rarely witnessed.

People who know nothing of a sea life fancy that fish is not a rarity with us; but there is nothing of which we taste so little; so that the greatest treat by far, when we come into port, is a dish of fresh soles or mackerel; and even the commonest fish that swims is looked upon as a treasure. It is only in soundings that any are to be met with; for, in the open and bottomless ocean, we meet nothing but whales, porpoises, dolphins, sharks, bonitas and flying fish.

I never could conceive, or form a probable conjecture, how it is that some persons manage to catch fish, and others none. It is easy to understand, that in angling, a certain degree of skill, or choice of situation, may determine the probable amount of success. But when a line is let down to the depth of eighty or a hundred fathoms, or even to twenty or thirty feet, quite out of sight, what has skill to do there? And yet, in a ship, on the banks of Newfoundland, or in a boat on the Thrumcap shoals in Halifax harbor, I have seen one man hauling in cods or haddocks as fast as he could bait his hooks; while others, similarly circumstanced in all apparent respects, might fret and fidget for half a day without getting more than a nibble.

There can be no doubt, of course, that intellectual power must be in operation at one end of the line, otherwise no fish will come to the other; but the puzzle is, by what mysterious process can human intelligence manage to find its way, like electricity, down the line to the bottom of the sea? I have often asked successful fishermen what they did to make the fish bite; but they could seldom give any available answer.— Sometimes they said it depended on the bait. "Well, then," I have answered, "let me take yours and do you take mine." But in two minutes after we had changed places, my companion was pulling in his fish as fast before, while not a twitch was given to my new line, though just before, the fish appeared to be jostling one another for the honour of my friends' hook, to the total neglect of that which had been mine, now in high vogue amongst them.

There is some trick or slight of hand, I suppose, by which a certain kind of motion is given to the bait, so as to assimilate it to

that of the worms which the fishes most affect in their ordinary researches for food.— But, probably, this art is no more to be taught by description, or to be learned without the drudgery of practice, than the dexterity with which an artist represents nature, or a dancer performs pirouettes. Uninstructed persons, therefore, who, like myself, lose patience because they cannot catch fish at the first cast of the line, had better turn their attention to something else.

Almost the only one I ever caught was during my first voyage across the Atlantic, when, after my line had been down a whole weary hour, I drew it up in despair. It felt so light, that I imagined the line must have been accidentally broken; but presently, and greatly to my astonishment, I beheld a huge cod float to the top, swollen to twice the usual dimensions by the expansion of its sound, as the air-bag is called, which lies along the back-bone. At the depth of eighty or ninety fathoms, this singular apparatus is compressed by the enormous addition of fifteen or sixteen atmospheres. But when the air is relieved of this weight, by approaching the surface, the strength of the muscles proves inadequate to retain it in its condensed form; and its consequent expansion not only kills the fish, but bursts it open as completely as if it had been blown up with gunpowder.

SCENES IN GRECE.

NO. II.

"I was a stranger, and ye took me in."

MAT. XIV. 85.

In England, even in almost every village there is an inn, or some lodging place, to which travellers resort; but not so in some foreign countries. In Egypt if you do not carry your provisions, you may have to live on the water of the Nile, and sleep in a boat or on the sand. In the Ionian Isles of late only, inns or locandas as they are called, have been established in the towns; but if you travel into the interior of these islands, you must be indebted to the hospitality of the villagers, or to the convents.— Travellers generally endeavour to reach one of these convents at night, to repose themselves after the journey of the day.

I left the town of Zante on a Thursday afternoon, taking books for distribution; and after going some miles on the sea-coast, as the night came on, I ascended a steep hill, where I found a lodging at the convent of St. John. The Superior was absent, but a Priest gave me and my companions a hearty reception, prepared supper, entered into conversation on religious subjects, and welcomed our arrival. Here I found, on inquiry, there were twelve Monks and Priests resident. Their occupations were different.— Some took care of the sheep on the mountains; others cultivated the ground. One Monk I found very old, having a long

white beard, who had been here fifty-five years; and another poor, aged, and blind Priest, who performed part of the service in the church. The next morning, at four o'clock, he groped his way to the picture of the Virgin Mary, to kiss it at the close of the service; which is generally done. Travelling further the next day, we came to the convent of St. Spiridotes, where the Priest was an intelligent man. On inquiring whether they had the holy Scriptures, a copy of the New Testament, printed by the British and Foreign Bible Society, was produced, which bore marks of being well read; as pieces of paper were put in to mark particular passages. Passing then the villages, we came to the convent of St. Andrea, beautifully situate amidst trees, near the sea.— The object of curiosity here, is an echo of a peculiar kind, produced by the surrounding hills. The sound of the voice rebounds very distinctly. Here I found a few Monks occupied as were those at St. John. Leaving St. Andrea, we came to St. George, another convent by the sea, with trees around; and here remained for the night. The Priest was very kind. Here we found a very excellent library on ecclesiastical subjects; the works of the Fathers, and other valuable writings. The next day we passed to another convent, called Anoforitra, where was a fair. In a small chapel, in which the Monks are buried, there were twelve skulls piled up in a kind of recess, carefully preserved. If some of the zealous advocates of phrenology were here, who judge of men's understandings and tempers by the bones of the skull, they would find fine scope for their talents or imagination.

How much it is to be regretted, that these institutions are sometimes so much abused! To these convents there is access only by roads over the mountains, in which are narrow passes, so that no carriage can approach them. The houses are built in good situations, with fine air, good water, and comfortable rooms well furnished. When accommodated in them, I was reminded of the sentence, "I was a stranger, and ye took me in;" and I felt thankful for the kindness of the Priests and Monks, though I could not appreciate of their seclusion from the world. I thought of the hymn so often sung in England,—

"Not in the tombs we pine to dwell,
Not in the dark monastic cell,
By rows and grates confined;
Freely to all ourselves we give,
Constrain'd, by Jesu's love, to live
The servants of mankind."

RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY.—The Anniversary meeting of this Society appointed to take place last night, is postponed until Thursday the 19th inst.—Chair to be taken at 7 o'clock, P. M.

Feb. 13.

THE WEEKLY MIRROR.

HALIFAX, FRIDAY, FEB. 13.

There never was a period when there existed greater facilities for the acquisition of scientific and literary information than the present. The progress of intelligence has gradually derobed science of that mysterious jargon in which it was the policy of the pretenders to philosophy, during the middle ages to invest it, in order to procure from their barbarous and superstitious contemporaries, a veneration which they were conscious they did not merit, and which they were well aware would not be paid them, if the sciences they professed were not wrapped in a garb of mystery which awed and imposed upon the vulgar. Now every department of science,—every branch of literature is rendered accessible to the commonest capacity; treatises have been composed simplifying the grand principles of philosophy, and illustrating by easy and familiar examples the facts from which these principles are drawn. Knowledge is no longer considered as a certain something attainable only by the study of years, and useful only as an employment for the philosopher, or a recreation for the rich. Throughout every department of society, from the wealthy nobleman who views in easy repose the beautiful exemplifications of the operation of nature which are constantly occurring in his own domain, and under his own eye, to the poor artisan who calls in his acquaintance with philosophy to aid him in the operations connected with his humble but useful career, the effect of the increased cultivation of science is observable.

No man will be a good citizen till he thinks—and no man will think till he begins to read. Every one therefore actuated by the philanthropic wish to benefit his fellow beings, should above all things, strive to inculcate a taste for reading. For this object principally, was our humble periodical called into existence, and so long only as we think it will contribute to this end, will its existence continue. We regret to state that a taste for reading is not so generally diffused in this community as in many others, which we have seen. The idle and dissipated habits, which we are sorry to say, are too generally characteristic of the younger classes of the population of Halifax, betoken an unhappy state of society; but we think that a change for the better is already taking place, and we hope at no distant period, to see the day when those hours which are now consumed in the frivolous, if not less harmless amusements of society, shall be devoted to the acquisition of useful knowledge. If our youth employed the time now spent in these amusements in storing their minds with learning, at the same time that they would be receiving a pleasure far more elevated and ennobling than they can derive

from the round of inanities which are now too commonly the objects of their pursuit, they would be qualified, when the course of events called them forward to the station in society to which their rank or their circumstances entitle them, to fulfil their duties with credit to themselves and advantage to their fellow citizens.

To the youth of the community more particularly we wish to address ourselves.—Though we hope that the pages of our periodical may sometimes contain hints which will not be unprofitable to the aged and the well informed, it is to the youth more particularly that we look for support, and we shall have a main aim to their benefit in such remarks of a scientific or literary nature as we may have occasion to make in the progress of our journal. The youth of our community are the germs of a generation to come, and upon the amount of their intelligence and information, will depend the character of the community which they themselves are hereafter to form. How necessary then that they should devote such part of their time as they can spare from the necessary occupations of society to the acquisition of scientific and moral information, that their minds may be improved with those solid principles of action which will qualify them for the active duties of life! The accomplishment of this end, will be one of the main features of our future exertion, and we shall be happy in receiving the co-operation of such among them whose talents and education may qualify them for furthering this object.

COMMUNICATIONS.

FOR THE MIRROR.

MR BOWES.—*If you think a short explanation of the Feasts and Festivals as observed by the Church throughout the year, will be acceptable to any of your juvenile friends, I will furnish you with them occasionally.*

MENTOR.

SEPTUAGESIMA, SEXAGESIMA, QUINQUAGESIMA SUNDAYS.—February 15, 22, and March 1.

There being exactly 50 days between the Sunday next before Lent and Easter day, inclusive, that Sunday is termed Quinquagesima (or Shrove Sunday) i. e. the 50th.—And the two immediately preceding are called from the next round numbers, Sexagesima, and Septuagesima, 60th and 70th. The Church thus early begins to look forward to Easter, the queen of festivals. She would call back our minds from the rejoicing season of Christmas, and by reflections on the humiliating necessity there was for Messiah's advent, prepare us for the solemn season of Lent, in which, if with deep contrition and lively faith we follow Christ in his sufferings, we may rejoice with him here, and humbly hope to reign with him hereafter in his glory.

FOR THE MIRROR.

Mr. Bowes.—I suppose Sir that you have readers of all ages and that you have discovered ere now that you have various tastes to please. If you think the following piece will be interesting to any of your readers please give it a place in your next Mirror.

A SUBSCRIBER.

Valentine's Day, 14th February.

St. Valentine was a Presbyter of the Church, who was beheaded in the time of Claudius the Emperor, but there is no occurrence in the legendary life of this Saint, in the slightest degree connected with the customs which have long been observed on this day; tho' Wheatley, in his illustrations of the Common Prayer, informs us, that he "was a man of most amiable parts, and so famous for his love and charity, that the custom of choosing Valentines upon his festival took its rise from thence."

It is a very general custom of doubtful origin, but of great antiquity, for young people to draw lots on the eve of Valentine's Day: the names of a select number of one sex are, by an equal number of the other, put into a box, out of which each person draws one, which is called their Valentine, and is looked upon as a good omen of their being man and wife afterwards.

This custom of choosing Valentines was a sport practised in the houses of the gentry of England as early as the year 1476; and John Lydgate, the Monk, of Bury, alludes to it in a poem written by him in praise of Queen Catherine.

The custom of drawing for valentines is still observed in the northern counties of England, where also the first woman seen by a man, or man seen by a woman, on Valentine's day, is marked for their Valentine for the ensuing year.

The rural tradition that, on this day, every bird chooses its mate, is alluded to by Chaucer, Shakspeare, and numerous other writers.

The customs of St. Valentine's day seem at present confined to that of young people sending complimentary or satirical letters to their acquaintance, and to such an extent is this custom carried, that in London alone, the increase of two-penny post letters on that day, exceeds two hundred thousand.

Gay has left us a poetical description of some rural ceremonies used on the morning of this day in his time:

"Last Valentine, the day when birds of kind
Their paramours with mutual chirpings find,
I early rose, just at the break of day,
Before the sun had chased the stars away;
A field I went, amid the morning dew,
To milk my kine (for so should house wives do.)
The first I spied, and the first swain we see,
In spite of fortune, shall our true love be."

STAR-LIGHT FROST.

*The stars are shining over head
In the clear frosty night;
So will they shine when we are dead,
As countless and as bright.
For brief the time and small the space
That e'en the proudest have,
Ere they conclude their various race
In silence and the grave.
But the pure soul from dust shall rise,
By our great Saviour's aid,
When the last trump shall rend the skies,
And all the stars shall fade.*

Rev. W. L. Bowles.

FOR THE MIRROR.

MR. BOWES.—Agreeably to the promise made to you last week, I herewith send you some of old Humphrey's plain and pithy remarks.

JUVENIS.

Feb. 9th, 1835.

PRINCIPLE AND PRACTICE.

It is of no use talking, for if a man have not correct principle, and if his practice be not in agreement with it, all the advantages in the world will never make him what he should be.

A poor man came to me to ask my advice about companions: 'Why,' said I, "companions may be found as plentiful as thorns upon a gooseberry bush, and the one will prove as sharp to your bosom as the other will be to your fingers, if you are not careful; but let *principle* and *practice* be your companions; the first will direct you in all cases what is best to be done, and the last will enable you to do it in the best manner; so long as you and principle and practice agree, so long will you prosper: but the moment you begin to differ, your prosperity and peace will melt away like a snow ball in a kettle of boiling water."

A wise man stopped to talk to me about a new carriage: "Never mind your carriage," said I, "but take especial care of your horses. Principle and practice are a pair of the best coach-horses in the world; while they run neck and neck together, you and your carriage will bowl along safely, but hold them up tightly, for if one trips, it will go hard with the other, and you may find yourself in the mire sooner than you expected."

Said a merchant to me, "I am about to send off a rich cargo, and must have experienced pilots on board; do you know any that you can recommend?" To be sure I do, replied I, the best that are to be found any where; *principle* and *practice* are the safest pilots you can employ. The one possesses the best compass in the world, and the other is unrivalled at the helm. You may securely trust your ship in their care.

I wish Mr. Humphrey, said a neighbour of mine, that you would recommend my son to some respectable house, for I want a son to put him apprentice." That I will said I, and directly too; my best shall be done to get him a situation under the firm of *Principle & Practice*, and a more respectable establishment is not to be found. So long as the parties in that firm hold together, they will be as safe as the Bank of England; but if a dissolution of partnership should ever take place, in a little time neither the one nor the other would be worth a penny."

"I want a motto," simpered a young man, who was about to have a ring engraved for his finger.—"and I will give you one," was my reply, "*Principle and Practice*, you may wear that on your finger and in your heart too, perhaps with advantage, it

is ten to one if you will ever meet with a letter.

Now my readers may, or may not follow my advice, but if, in adopting any other, they disregard correct principle and upright practice, they will prepare for themselves, a bitter portion; a life of vexation, and a death of sorrow.

"Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace." Psalm xxvii. and 37 v.

VARIETIES.

HOW CAN A CHALLENGE BE REFUSED?

In a Court infamous for licentiousness, and in times when the point of honour, falsely so called, was preserved in its full extravagance, Marshall Turenne, was never known either to fight a duel, or to be engaged in an intrigue. The grace, the dignity with which he once released himself from an embarrassment of his nature, will at once give an exact idea of what he was, and be a sufficient answer to the favourite question of the defenders of duelling, "How is it to be refused?" Let this anecdote of Turenne answer them.

A young officer, of noble family, and in many points, really of moral worth, imagined that he had received an insult from the Marshall, and demanded satisfaction in the usual forms. The Marshall made no reply to his challenge; the officer repeated it several times, but the Marshall still maintained the same silence. Irritated at this apparent contempt, the officer resolved to compel him to the acceptance of his challenge. For this purpose he watched him upon his walks, and at length met him in the public street, accompanied by two other general officers.—He hurried towards him, and to the astonishment of all who saw him, spat in the Marshall's face. Let us endeavour to form some conception of the grossness of the insult.—The object of it was the great Turenne, a Marshall of France, and one of the greatest Generals that Europe has produced! The companions of the Marshall started back in amazement. The Marshall, his countenance glowing with a sense of indignity, seized the hilt of his sword, and had already half unsheathed it, when, to the astonishment of the spectators, he suddenly returned it to the scabbard, and taking his handkerchief from his pocket, "Young man, said he, "could I wipe your blood from my conscience, with as much ease as I can your spittle from my face, I would take your life on the spot. Go Sir!" Saying this the Marshall retired. The young officer was so much struck, as well with his manner as with his virtue, that he sought, and did not cease till he had obtained pardon of the Marshall. Turenne afterwards became his patron, and under such a predecessor he became almost the rival of his fame.

SUNDAY SCHOOLS.—The deep root which Sunday Schools have taken in Maine, will appear from the fact, that there are within its borders no less than 920 Schools well organized. These are taught by teachers falling but little short of 6000 in number—instruct about 39,000 children, and have attached to them libraries composed of something over 47,000 volumes. These statements are gathered from a careful annualization of actual returns, and if we complete the calculation, by adding the Schools known to exist, but from which no accounts have been received, it can be made, perhaps, quite clear, that one half of the population of the State, between the ages of five and fifteen, are participants in their benefits. And when it is considered, that Maine is an Atlantic State, and has a considerable population upon its islands—that it is a new State, and numbers many inhabitants in distant, scattered, and remote settlements—and that a large proportion of its people, back from the coast, are agricultural, and do not, of course, live in compact masses, or even within very convenient distances for establishing these schools—and that, besides, they are of recent origin,—it may be said, that their progress and present condition are both wonderful and encouraging.—Eastport Sentinel.

We should like to receive information relative to the rise and progress of Sunday Schools in Halifax, and the different parts of the Province where they are established.—Mr.

Nothing can be more ungrateful than to pass over the works of God without consideration. To study them is among the highest gratifications the human mind can enjoy, provided the study is conducted upon religious principles. The book of nature is open to all. "On every leaf, Creator, God, is written. Let us, then, daily employ some of those intervals of leisure which all may command, in examining those objects which fall under our immediate observation, and we shall find cause to say, with the inspired Psalmist, from the conviction of our own minds, 'O Lord how manifold are thy works: in wisdom hast thou made them all, the earth is full of thy riches.'"

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