THE

CATHOLIC CITIZEN

VOLUME VI. 1920.



CATHOLIC WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE SOCIETY, 55, BERNERS STREET, LONDON, W.1.

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VOL VI., NO. I.

PRICE ONE PENNY.

THE HIGHER LIFE.

January 15th, 1920.

BY ELIZABETH CHRISTITCH.

We often hear deplored the dearth of reli- careless dictum that woman's main object in gious vocations, and, curiously enough, in life is the bringing of children into the world. quarters where there is seldom open advo- Yet we hear it repeated in Catholic circles, cacy of the celibate life conducive to such vocations. For the rousing call in highways to every Christian just as much as is the and byways to join the army of Christ we must hark back to the Middle Ages. Today there is but faint encouragement to young people, irresolute in the choice of a state of life, to throw in their lot with the wholehearted servants of God who turn their backs on the world and choose the better part. The Protestant spirit has not only infected our external manifestations of worshippublic processions are being with difficulty revived,-but our very habits of thought. By tacit understanding it would seem that where there is a numerous family of girls no allusion is made to a possible inclination for life in the Cloister. The contingency is not dwelt upon, but rather avoided as exceptional, improbable, and, indeed, undesirable. Wherever she stands, or sits, and, unfortunately, sometimes where she kneels, a girl is told that her first and best rôle is that of wife and mother. Neither in the home, nor elsewhere, is the alternative suggested. Our literature is so imbued with Lutherau principles that matrimony is lauded to the skies, and girls in the aggregate are invited to marry as a duty, even though it is a wellknown fact that there are not enough husbands to go round! While the delight of motherhood is a favourite theme, there is neither room, nor time, nor cogent advice for the girl who, by nature, leans to celibacy, and might go to fill the ranks of depleted

become oblivious of the nobler calling open vocation of marriage. From the side of mere prudence, nevertheless, rushing into marriage, which has no novitiate, is surely more perilous than entering a convent where one's dispositions are well probed and tested before the final step is allowed. One hears it said that marriage is for the majority, and aspirants to the religious life will be always comparatively rare. But this is a state of things to be remedied, and not accepted and approved. While the advantages of a celibate life are kept in the background and those of matrimony extolled, no wonder that only a minority pause to consider the former. A call to God's exclusive service sometimes falls on plants too weak to overcome their surroundings which hold up wifehood as worthier. Should logical Christianity fail to turn hearts and minds to the finest ideal of womanhood : consecrated virginity?

No need to extol the attributes of motherhood. They have been chaunted in all tongues, by all creeds, throughout the ages. But the mere animal fact of motherhood should not be praised beyond proportion as meritorious in itself. Such a Lutheran appreciation is incompatible with finer Catholic feeling. There is a spiritual motherhood far superior to the merely natural one. and more effective. While flesh and blood ties unite the offspring to the bodily mother, soul direction on the part of a saintly, learned missionary orders if the value of the work nun, is of infinitely more value. When both and its lofty aspect were brought within the are combined then indeed is motherhood ensphere of her ken. Quite Protestant is the titled to sincere respect. Even then, never-

theless, it is beneath the chosen state of a women vote, but three women were successvirgin dedicated to worship of her Creator, ful at the poll, a professor, a bourgeoise and for the virgins follow the Lamb. A deviated a cigar maker! (International Woman Suffconception of this truth reveals the trail of the "Reformers" who broke down the doors of monasteries and convents, lowering women to the sole quality of servants in wedlock. They had a grounded fear of spinsters who, as Fry, Nightingale, and hosts of others afterwards proved, could find time and liberty to pry into dark places tolerated by themselves.

proclaiming matrimony as the likeliest career for girls of to-day. To be a wife and mother may be the more heroic; to be a religious is more sublime. It is likewise misleading to demobilised soldier. say that maternity is the crown of womanhood. As Catholics we know better. The nun before the Altar is nearer to Christ.

We know that the married are " busy with the cares of this life," and " seek to please their partners." The unmarried, on the other hand, may freely tend upward, ignore the turmoil of earth, and attain the joys of a supernatural world. Why does human respect hinder this from being emphasised? Marriage is natural, and human nature may be fine; but the control of human nature is finer.

INTERNATIONAL NOTES.

A "Syndicate of Mothers" has been started in Rome having for its objects the improvement of elementary education. Better buildings, better teaching and a more intelligent care of the childrens' health are among the aims that the mothers are setting themselves to attain. When one remembers that about 50 per cent. of the population of the whole of Italy still rank as "analfabeti," i.e. unable to read or write, it is encouraging to learn that the mothers are at last trying to take things into their own hands. (Cimento,

Nov.). * * * *

Although Italian women still have no vote, the women of Fiume are already able to vote on the same terms as men under the new constitution recently conferred upon the town, and at the first election for the Municipal Council held in the autumn not only did

rage News.)

It appears, from the same source, that Italian women who have been doing men's work during the war are meeting, now the war is over, with as little gratitude as women at home. There, as here, they are being compelled not only to give up their war-work. but to abandon avenues of employment which Let us not imitate the "Reformers" in they had previously enjoyed. Milan would seem to be the centre of an anti-feminine campaign which operates under the cloak of patriotism by championing the needs of the

*

Women speakers are not widely encouraged at the French Semaines Sociales the first of which, since the war, took place at Metz during the autumn. We are all the more glad to learn from a report in the Action Sociale de la Femme, (Nov.) that at least one woman orator, Melle Poncet, gave a most interesting address on the growth of the Catholic syndi cates among the working-women of the department of the Isère, urging the absolute need for women of industrial organisation.

* *

* *

In the excellently edited Femme Belge, a monthly periodical now in its third year, we find (Oct.) a thought-compelling article on "The Adolescent Work-girl," pointing out to her more well-to-do sisters how she lives and the many temptations to which she is daily subjected. As a picture of workingclass life in and around Brussels it is certainly melancholy reading and goes to shew once again the social demoralisation induced in every country by a prolonged state of war, nor is it easy to indicate any immediate remedy. The writer, J. Cardyn, is at least taking a first step by making known in detail in a series of articles the conditions of employment among various classes of young female workers. * * * *

The Catholic Women's Union of Crovatia who have placed the enfranchisement of women on their programme have issued the first number of their monthly review "The (Continued on page 3).

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NOTES AND COMMENTS.

for the repose of the soul of the Very Revd Canon Brenan, who died recently. Canon Brenan was an associate of the C.W.S.S. and one from whom those responsible for this paper received great encouragement.

In answer to our telegram of congratulation Ladv Astor, M.P., sends the following letter to the C.W.S.S.:

"I thank you very much indeed for your kind congratulations on my election.

I feel that it is a great honour and even greater responsibility that has been conferred upon me, and I hope to do all in my power to prove worthy of it. Alas there is much to be done, and I shall hope for the co-operation and support of all my friends and even my enemies when it comes to that.

Yours sincerely.

NANCY ASTOR.

Lady Astor has written to women's organisations stating that she feels she has a special opportunity of helping Women's Societies, and is anxious to be thoroughly in touch with their opinions and wishes. She hopes to be of service both by asking questions and by affording an easier channel for making representations to the Government. She is determined to do her best to be useful to the causes and interests of women. Her hope is that women will be able to act up to their beliefs irrespective of party politics. She can see no political solution until they do.

We, too, have always said that the aims and ideals of the woman's movement are above party politics.

> * * *

The Sex Disgualification Bill having now passed into law, a woman may be Prime Minister or Lord Chancellor, but she has not free entry into industry nor into the Civil Service. One may judge by this how real is the belief in the equality of the sexes.

* * * *

In view of the passing of the Bill into law the Lord Chancellor has appointed a Central Advisory Committe of women to assist him in the appointment of women to the Commission of the Peace. The Committee consists of the Marchioness of Crewe (Chairman), Marchion-

We ask our members and readers to pray ess of Londonderry, Mrs. Lloyd George, Miss Elizabeth Haldane, Miss Gertrude Tuckwell, Mrs. Humphrey Ward, and Mrs. Sidney Webb. The members of the Committee will be placed upon the Commission of the Peace. It is to be hoped that the new Committee will press the Lord Chancellor to appoint women to Children's Courts as soon as possible, for their presence there is urgently needed. And not in those Courts only.

* * *

We note that that excellent and progressive paper "The Sower," says in speaking of the servile State that : " There are two (and only two) organised forces which demand both the living wage and human freedom, these two forces are the Catholic Church and the trade union movement. They ought to be better acquainted with each other." For ourselves we have grave doubts of the love of freedom of the Trade Union movement, especially since the passing of the Pre-War Practices Bill, with all its injustices to women. But even if one were to allow that the Trade Union movement stands for freedom, there is still another force which stands for freedom and the living wage, and that is the Women's Movement. It is a force which is gaining daily in strength, and gaining ground within the ranks of Catholics.

(Continued from page 2).

Woman's Mind." The contents include excellent articles on social, political and religious questions, and of special interest is an account of the work, objects, aims and successes of the Catholic Women's Suffrage Society in this country.

The Catholic women of Crovatia now merged in Yugoslavia look to the Catholic Women pioneers of England for encourage. ment and inspiration.

> * * *

Beginning with January the News Sheet of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom will be replaced by an organ PAX ET LIBERTAS, issued every other month, with four additional supplements in the course of the year. The price for these ten issues will be five francs a year, and 50 cent. a copy. V.M.C.

THE CATHOLIC CITIZEN.

THE CATHOLIC WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE SOCIETY,

THE CATHOLIC CITIZEN. Monthly. post free, 18 6d. per annum. Signed articles do not necessarily represent the opinions of the Society.

Office: 55, BERNERS STREET, LONDON, W., I. Tel. Museum 4181. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

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THE SACRED RIGHTS OF CHILDHOOD.

In accordance with the resolution passed at mons must require evidence to be given as to the Mansion House Conference in February, 1918, there was established, as most of our readers are no doubt aware, a National Council to secure better provision for, and protection of, the unmarried mother and her child. The aims of this National Council are :

1. To obtain reform of the existing Bastardy Acts and Affiliation Orders Act.

2. To secure the provision of adequate accommodation to meet the varying needs of mothers and babies throughout the country, such provision to include Hostels with Day Nurseries attached, where the mother can live with her child for at least two years, whilst continuing her ordinary work.

It is scarcely necessary to deal again in this paper with the urgency of the problem of the girl mother, anyone, who has given the matter a thought, knows that it is urgent, and knows that new legislation on more humane and generous lines than in the past is long overdue.

The law regarding illegitimacy is so far from satisfactory that the National Council for the Unmarried Mother and her Child has made the amendment of the Bastardy Acts one of its principal aims. A Bill has been drafted, and will be, it is hoped, shortly introduced into the House of Commons. It has the support not only of the N.C.U.M.C., but also of the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children.

The Bill is sane and reasonable, and has many good points. For instance, it enables proceedings under the Act to be instituted at any time, though if after the expiration of twelve months from the birth of an illegitimate child the Court before issuing the sum- House of Commons.

the reason for delay.

It enacts that the amount to be paid by the father shall be such as in the circumstances of each case shall appear to the Court to be equitable. And, one of the most important changes of all, it would enable children born out of wedlock to be legitimised by the subsequent marriage of their parents. That is in accordance with Roman Law and with Canon Law, and England is one of the very few civilised countries, where such a law does not obtain. It is a blot upon our country that should have been removed long since.

It is obviously not possible to criticise in detail a Bill which is still under revision, but it may not be amiss to point out that as it stands there are certain dangerous tendencies in it. For instance, many of us would prefer that information given by the mother should be voluntary and not compulsory. Cases might very well arise where the mother would prefer not to give the father's name, and where it would be better that she should not make it public, and if she is willing and able to support the child, she should not be compelled to give this information.

Again, though we know that the whole policy of the National Council is to keep mother and child together, in which they have the support of all enlightened people, we feel that there are parts of the Bill which, if left as they now are, will certainly be interpreted in a contrary sense. But these are defects which we hope that the framers of the Bill will amend before it takes permanent shape.

We shall return to this important subject again before the Bill is introducd in the L. DE ALBERTI.

THE CATHOLIC CITIZEN.

Suggested Change of Name for C.W.S.S.

Dear Miss de Alberti,

Miss Willis, in her interesting letter, brings forward certain reasons against changing the name of our Society. One, that we should appear by so-doing to " unlink ourselves from that chain of sympathy and interest that should bind together all women in other countries," etc. In reply to that, I maintain that our own country comes first, and it is our duty to do all we can to strengthen our Society and extend its influence in England. It will then have more power to help the women in other countries.

Now that women have a limited suffrage. our Society should not confine itself to working for a further extension of the franchise but should also do all in its power to help women to use for good the power they have already obtained.

If the Society does this, its present name does not accurately describe it.

As for "the public getting accustomed to a name," it has become so accustomed to look upon the name of suffrage with disapproval, it would be well to awaken fresh interest and to give the said public a new name to think of and perhaps regard with approval.

Lastly, there has always been confusion between the C.W.S.S. and the C.W.L. causing mistakes and sometimes annovance to both Societies. Were we to change our title to the more comprehensive one of Catholic Women Pioneers this confusion would be impossible.-Truly yours, A. H. BENNETT. 30, Cissbury Road, Hove.

Dear Madam.

With reference to the proposed change of title for our Catholic Women's Suffrage Society, may I remark that the name is endeared to us all from the first difficult days when we were misunderstood, discouraged and even maligned. As the object for which the Society was formed has not yet been attained, there is surely no need to discard the name under which we have received the approval of our beloved Pontiff His Holiness Benedict XV.

Yours etc.,

ANNIE CHRISTITCH, B.A., (Lond.) Naval and Military Hotel, S.W. 7.

ANNUAL MEETING. FOR MEMBERS ONLY.

Our Annual Meeting will be held on Saturday February 14th nominations for Committee and Resolutions for Agenda should reach the Secretary not later than January 26th. Will members please take this as official notice to save postage.

TREASURERS' NOTE.

I would again remind members of the C.W.S.S. this month that Annual Subscriptions are now due, and urge them to give as generously as possible to the Society in 1920. Subscriptions paid promptly are of much greater value than those long delayed. My list of contributions is held over until next issue.

LONDON NEWS.

Office: 55 Berners St. London. W.I. Tel. Museum, 4181. Hours: 3-30-5-30. Saturdays, 10-30-1-30. Other times by appointment.

Our Annual Meeting will take place on Saturday, February 14th. We hope to see as many of our members as can possibly attend. The important proposal of a change of name will then be decided.

We offer our hearty congratulations to our members Mrs. Elizabeth Christitch and Miss Annie Christitch who have received from the Holy Father his portrait with an autograph dedication giving them his special blessing. It was Miss Annie Christitch, it will be remembered, who in a private audience obtained from the Holy Father a statement of his approval of women suffrage, and of the aims of the C.W.S.S.

FIRST WOMAN MAGISTRATE.

The honour of being the first woman magistrate goes to Mrs. Summers, Mayor of Stalybridge. Under the new Act Mrs. Summers becomes a magistrate by virtue of her office as Mayor. Mrs. Thomson is the first woman student for the English Bar at Lincoln's Inn; Miss Normanton has been admitted at the Middle Temple; and Miss Maud Ingram will be articled to a leading firm of Solicitors,

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RELATIVES OF WOUNDED.

I wonder how many people know of the to find accommodation for first one, then two work for the relatives of sick and wounded carried on in France during the war. I cannot give statistics of it-besides statistics are often meaningless, but I would much like to give the readers of the " Catholic Citizen " a little account of my experience of the work. I applied to go to France under the Y.M.C.A. in June, 1918, and arrived in August at A-----, just in time for the tail-end of those raids which were devasting northern French towns in a way that even Londoners can hardly realise. It was at A---- that nine little Waacs were killed on Corpus Christi night, and their remains rest on the neighbouring hillside. The raids at A----- were so bad that each night most of the townspeople trekked out to the villages around, and many people camped nightly in the neighbouring forests. The Y.M.C.A. staff had been turned out of their headquarters owing to its being bombed three times and left in a state of ruin, and had taken refuge in the Relatives Hostel, a beautiful old town mansion built round a cobbled courtyard and dominated by a towering chestnut tree, and with a dainty garden behind in which Mdlle. de B-----, an ancient dame of the old aristocracy, had formerly superintended her flowerbeds, gravel walks, and fruit trees. At this time there were no relatives; they were not allowed to come out, owing to the determined, nightly raids, and the German advance, which latter had only just been turned. I found I was to take charge of personel-a mixed assemblege of highly educated professors, hut leaders, office staff, motorists and mechanics; it was a truly democratic household and extremely interesting.

The first night was enlivened by a raid, during which we, perforce, descended to the well built cellar and there awaited death, or "les clôches" which meant safety, amidst hundreds of neatly binned bottles of choice wine belonging to Mddle de B---'s heirs. Several Frenchwomen from a neighbouring street were there wailing and beating their breasts with an abandonment quite disconcerting to stolid Britishers. Others were quite silent, among them, a shrivelled old woman of over 90 who lived next door.

After a few days the ban against relatives coming out was removed, and I found I had and then an average of 15 or 20 until the château was overflowing. In one room there would be the personel enjoying their wellearned evening recreation, dancing, singing, laughing, and in the next some poor bereaved mother grieving over her son's death of a few hours back.

This could not continue, and as soon as possible the staff found quarters in another wonderful old mansion in a different part of the town.

I was asked which I would do-follow the workers or remain with the relatives. It was a hard question to decide, and I carried my difficulties to the head of the Y.M.C.A. in France to whom I had an introduction, and who was passing through the town. His answer was, "I wouldn't hesitate; there are ladies in England who would give anything for your opportunity; it is sad work but worth while, and the chances of being useful in it are many and great." That decided me, and for the remainder of my time I stayed with and tried to " mother " the relatives.

In some places the Red Cross took officers' relatives, and the Y.M.C.A. the people of N.C.O.'s and privates, but in this hostel, the nearest one to the firing line, they were mixed, and we had the Lancashire mill girl and the agricultural labourer sitting next to the titled husband and wife and enjoying exactly the same treatment as to billets and messing.

The chateau possessed 14 bedrooms accommodating in all about 22, not including the French maids who mostly slept out. Each bedroom was kept ready for guests with clean sheets, towels, etc., and was numbered, and its number and accommodation known to the trusty orderly (an Indian cavalryman), whose duty it was, lantern in hand, to open the great gates in the middle of the night and let in the travel-stained visitors. An electric bell rang in his room and mine and I quickly got up, and came down to superintend the welcome.

The relatives summoned to the bedside of their dear one were hurried across from any part of the United Kingdom, no matter how remote, and became the joint guests of the Government and the organisation receiving in London, on train and boat, fares paid (except in the case of officer's relatives who were able to afford it), and they were motored quickly up from the Channel Port to the hospital.

After seeing the patient, if he was not in immediate danger, they were brought to the château and given a good meal with hot drinks and put to bed in one of the quaint tapestried rooms with canopied and curtained beds and glorious furniture, in one of which it was said royalty had slept.

Hot water was provided, but the washhandbasins were sadly small, often not much larger than a respectable British sugar bowl, and every drop of water had to be pumped from the courtyard well.

The next morning after a good breakfast they were motored to hospital, where they remained until dinner in the middle of the day, and then they were taken to the hospital till supper time, tea being provided in the hospital hut. In the evening the great object was to divert them if possible by music, books and even games and the cinema, a private view of the last being sometimes given in the long salle à manger.

A large percentage of the patients it was found turned the corner on the arrival of their relatives and began to recover; this was due to the mental relief which was as a weight in the scales. For doctors did not wait until their was no hope-they considered the patients' welfare and sent for parents or wife when they thought their arrival would give a new lease of life. And the relatives who came-some were women with babies in their arms who had only had time to throw a shawl over their heads; they had no luggage and we were able to lend them change of clothing from our store; others were furgarbed and bejewelled and came with leather suitcases and dressing bags.

One old couple, dazed and bewildered, had never left England in their lives and had never expected to-again, a Scottish mother and sister who had come to see a boy of 19 with three limbs gone and only kept alive by transfusion of blood from another patient. Incidentally how can one say enough for the magnificent work done by the doctors, nurses and orderlies, not to speak of the motor drivers, driving through the night in mist

them. Everything was made easy for them, and fog along the endless poplar-lined roads of France.

> And sometimes the patient died and then all in the house, French maids included, turned all their energies to trying to comfort as far as possible the poor bereaved, suffering in a foreign land, but, what could we do? Nothing but sit with them, listen to them, throwing out all the sympathetic thoughts possible and seeing that creature comforts such as a blazing fire, hot tea or coffee, etc., were not lacking.

Then came the funeral, after a day's inter. val, and we followed the flag-covered coffin to the military cemetery on the hill outside the town. At these funerals, most reverently conducted as they were, I had the privilege of being able to suggest and get accepted a reform in detail, which though a small one meant a great deal to the relatives present. When the coffins on the transports arrived from the various hospitals they were lined up in a row just below the burying place. Now the rule of the Army is that the funerals take place in the following order, Church of England, Nonconformist, Catholic and Jew, so when the transports arrived and the padre waited, the attendants had to lift up each Union Jack to see which denomination each soldier had belonged to. One mother turned to me and said, "They don't seem to know which my poor boy is." After a word to the sergeant majors of the hospitals this method ceased and the coffins were sent out in order according to denomination. The Last Post sounded, the gerbes or wreaths of flowers laid down by the grave, we drove back to the château, and there the relatives were given lunch before proceeding to the station armed with packets of sandwiches and a beautiful coloured print of their son's or husband's last resting place.

Though all entertainment was free, sometimes the officers relative or the richer visitors gave me a donation and this I always spent in laving flowers on the gaves or in carrying large baskets of luscious fruit round the hospital wards.

And now, thank God, there is no need for the work of "Relatives of Wounded," but I shall always be grateful I was privileged to help in a small way in one of the most humane enterprises of the war.

MARGUERITE FEDDEN.

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Wed. Jan. 21, 3 p.m. Speaker, Mrs. Mustard. Subject : "Mother's Pensions." Chair-Mrs Tanner.

Wed. Jan. 28, 3 p.m. Speaker: Miss Raleigh. Subject: "The Rights of Animals in Ancient and in Modern Times"

Friday, Jan. 30. Debate: "Does Mme. Montessori preach a new Gospel in matters educational?'

Wed, Feb. 4th, 3 p m. Speaker: Clir: Norah March, B.Sc. Subject: "Child Welfare." Chair-Miss F. A. Underwood.

- Thurs. Feb. 5th, 6 p.m. Speaker : Mr. W. Clarke Hall. Subject: "The Naughty Child." Chair-Mrs. J. E. Cliffe.
- Wed. Feb. 11th, 3 p.m. Speaker: Mrs. Zangwill. Subject: "The Reading Public." Chair-Mrs. Earengy.

Tea can be obtained in the Cafe at close of meeting at 6d. each.

WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE.

Monday, Jan. 19, Essex Hall, Essex Street, Strand. W.C., 7-30. Subject : "Woman's Right to Live." Speakers: Mr. George Lansbury, Miss Haslett (Sec. Women's Engineering Soc.), Miss D. Evans, M.A. (Sec. Assn. of Women Clerks and Secretaries), Miss Anna Munro, and discharged women workers. Chair-Miss A. M. Clark. ADMISSION FREE.

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- Wed. 21st Jan., 8 15 p.m. "Debussy as related to the past and prefent progress of music." Mrs. F. Shirley Liebich. Piano illustra-tions by Mr, Frank Liebech.
- Wed. 28th Jan., 8-15 p m⁻ "The Middle Classes Unlon" Mr. Kennedy Jones, M.P. Chairman-Mrs. T. Dexter.
- Wed. 4th Feb., 7-15 p.m. HOUSE DINNER (Postponed from Dec. 3rd) "Experience versus Enthusiasm" Miss Mildred Ransom, Mr. Philip Myring.
- Wed. 11th Feb. 8-15 p.m. "Careers for Women Overseas" Miss St, John Wileman. Chairman-Lady Askwith.

18th Feb. 8-15 p.m. "Some Poets and their Message" Mr. R. Dimsdale Stocker. Chairman-Mr. Harry Simpson. Wed

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