

About 1820

No. 1.

ST. DOMINGO.

[Compiled, chiefly, from recent publications.]

It is not doubted that the misrepresentations that the enemies of freedom have so industriously circulated, relative to the disturbances on this island, keep a great many honest men from joining the anti-slavery cause. It has been said by them, so many times, that "immediate emancipation" in St. Domingo was attended with the most horrid massacres on the part of the blacks, that many persons recoil from the doctrine of *immediateism*, who might otherwise prove themselves to be the practical friends of liberty in the United States.

We propose, therefore, to give in these pages a statement of facts from a highly respectable work, by which it will be seen, in the language of the author, that "the commotions in Hayti may be principally attributed to the impolicy and injustice of the planters and colonists themselves; that the slave population, in endeavoring to recover their freedom, were guilty of no greater cruelties than those exercised towards them by their oppressors; and thus will be obviated the erroneous opinion which ascribes exclusively to the negroes, those deeds of bloodshed and destruction that marked the contest."

American Anti-Slavery Society, No. 148 Nassau Street, New York.



The author of the work from which we extract is W. W. HARVEY, Esq., Fellow of Queen's College, Cambridge, England. Mr. H. resided some time in Hayti. At the beginning of his book, (which was published in 1827) he is at the pains to inform his readers that he was then opposed to the doctrine of immediate emancipation. This, it will be remembered, was before the experiment had been tried with such remarkable and gratifying success in Bermuda and Antigua. The testimony of such a witness to the safety of emancipation in St. Domingo, must convince even prejudice and passion.—ED.

EFFECTS OF IMMEDIATE EMANCIPATION IN ST.
DOMINGO.

The effects produced on the negroes by the contentions among the French residents, the proceedings of the mulattoes, and the exertions of the Amis des Noirs, were such as might have been easily foreseen. * * * Nothing was more natural than their determination to escape from the yoke under which they groaned, and to assert their right to liberty and independence. * * * *

The negroes had risen, bent on obtaining their freedom, and the mulattoes on securing their privileges;—these were crimes, in the estimation of the colonists, never to be forgiven. Slavery or destruction was the demand of the planters;

liberty or death, the determination of the insurgents.

The disregard of the former to all their claims, the repeated refusal to grant them redress, or to allow their condition to be in any degree ameliorated, with the violence of the measures pursued in order to subdue them, served only to render them more desperate and formidable. Neither their scanty resources on the one hand, nor the strong opposition which they met with on the other, could shake their resolution, or diminish their thirst for revenge. But animated by their numbers, and growing increasingly fierce by their ravages, an occasional defeat caused only a momentary check before the flame broke forth in all its fury.

Then it was that ST. DOMINGO became the scene of the most dreadful ravages, and of massacres as horrid as the world has ever witnessed.

The revolted, it should be remembered, did not engage in this work of destruction because their liberty was granted, but because it was denied them. They did not murder the whites because the latter showed a disposition to lessen their toils and sufferings, and to render their condition less grievous and degrading; or because they held out to them the prospect of emancipation at a future period; but because they evinced a determination to retain them in a state of slavery, and to subject them to all its miseries.

While these commotions were at their height, the English, then at war with France, invaded St. Domingo. The French had now two enemies to oppose; the regular and well disciplined troops of the British army, and the revolted negroes. After several ineffectual attempts to withstand the former, the French commissioners, to whom the government of the island had been intrusted, issued a proclamation of freedom, with a view to ensure the assistance of all the negroes. This, at the moment, was considered a dangerous experiment. It was without parallel in the history of slavery; and its effects on the negroes, under existing circumstances, could not be determined with any degree of certainty. No longer in subjection to the laws of a degrading servitude, and collected together in one body, they might easily have fallen on those who, till this time, had shown themselves their greatest oppressors. But the revolters, as well as the other negroes, instantly joined the French forces, and united with them in endeavoring to expel what they considered a common foe. For the invaders, they concluded came not to assist them in maintaining their rights, but to drive out the French, to claim the colony, and to endeavor, at least, to re-establish and perpetuate the system which was at this moment abolished.

During the ensuing contest, the French had no reason to lament the important step they had taken. Its history furnishes the most satisfac-

tory proofs, that to the exertions of the negroes, they were principally* indebted for the expulsion of the English, and their continued possession of the island: that, in short, had they been destitute of negro soldiers, they would have thought themselves fortunate in escaping with their lives, leaving their foes in quiet possession of their richest and most important colony. Many of their bravest and most skilful leaders were selected from among them. The distinguished talents of *Toussaint L'Ouverture*, and the importance of his active and persevering efforts are well known, and have been duly appreciated. The zeal and bravery of *Christophe* placed him next in rank and influence to *Toussaint*.

Both were negroes, and had been slaves, but now employed their talents, and risked their lives, in defending their late masters, with the utmost ardor and fidelity.

The struggle was long and doubtful; and the sufferings of both parties, from the loss of men, want of provisions, and the diseases incidental to the climate, were severe. The negroes endured their portion; and that, it should be remembered, for the men by whom they had been enslaved, and in order that *they*† might

* The writer might have said, altogether.—ED.

† Mr. Harvey here refers to the French nation, and not to the whites of St. Domingo. Towards the royalist pro-slavery party who had called in the British

retain the possession and government of the island. Nor should it be forgotten, that the French were not in circumstances to command the assistance of the negroes; especially that of those who had become open revolters.—They might have refused it without danger to themselves, and have abandoned the French to their fate. But throughout the contest, there was nothing that indicated a disposition to avenge themselves of their former sufferings; nothing that occurred among them contrary to the firmest attachment to the cause of their late masters, and a zealous perseverance in opposing the enemy. * * * * *

These were circumstances in which the negroes had never before been placed; and their character was, therefore, to undergo a further trial. Having one of their own race at the head of affairs, trained by long service to military exercises, in possession of the instruments of war, and having nothing to oppose them but

for the very purpose of reducing the negroes to the old yoke, they were of course hostile. The aim of Toussaint, in driving out the British, was to preserve the colony to France, now revolutionized, under which he undoubtedly aspired to the chief command. The point to be looked at is, that throughout this war, the negroes, with a vast majority of the power, both physical and intellectual, in their hands, paid the most sacred regard to the rights, property, and interests of all those whites who took the side of the Commissioners of the French National Convention. These whites had nearly all been slave masters.—ED.

the broken remains of the French forces; how easily might they have shaken off all connexion with the mother country, have asserted their complete independence, and destroyed those who should oppose them! There was no obstacle to their avenging themselves on their former oppressors, either by expelling them from the island, or by cutting them off; nor to their abandoning the plantations to the ruin which the late war, with the preceding ravages had already commenced.

These considerations readily presented themselves to the minds of the remaining planters; nor could they help entertaining a serious concern for their own safety, and for the peace and tranquility of the colony. But the event showed, that their fears were altogether destitute of foundation. The administration of Toussaint, for its ability, mildness, and integrity, they acknowledged was beyond all praise. Considering the interests of France alone, the colony had never been in a more prosperous condition. The negroes gave every proof of industry, subordination, and content. They diligently cultivated the plantations, and received the wages of their labor. They submitted cheerfully to all those regulations which it was thought necessary to establish; and living in possession of their freedom, were satisfied and happy. Those whose merits had raised them to stations of honor and responsibility, were as solicitous for the

re-establishment of the French interests as for the preservation of their own freedom. In short, the colony had seldom been more productive, the revenue which it afforded to the mother country more abundant, the persons and property of the planter more secure, nor the negroes themselves more industrious and peaceful. In this manner things would have no doubt proceeded—the natives improving in the arts of peace and civilization—the produce of the island yielding increased wealth both to the proprietors and to the cultivators—till the distinctions of color and the prejudices founded on them would have been forgotten—and the whole state of things have presented a proof that whites and blacks may, in all respects, become equals, and regard each other as brethren—had not the restless ambition of the usurper of France, and the discontent of the ex-colonists, disturbed the tranquillity of the island, and suddenly renewed those contests, which, it was hoped, had for ever ceased.

During the short interval of peace between England and France in 1802, an expedition was fitted out by the government of the latter country, and sent to ST. DOMINGO. Its professed design was to subdue those in the colony who, they would have it thought, were inimical to the authority of the mother country; its real object was to reduce the negroes to slavery a second time. For this purpose an army, whose valor had been previously tried in Europe, was trans-

ported across the Atlantic, under the command of one of their most popular generals. [Le Clerc.] It was further intended that the negroes should be scattered over different parts of the colony, so as to prevent their collecting together in large bodies; and other arrangements having been made, slavery was to be again proclaimed. Than the injustice of this attempt nothing can be more glaring. Independent of the natural right of the negroes to liberty, their freedom had been declared by the French commissioners, and recognised and confirmed by the French government. That government now attempted to enslave them again. Could it be for a moment expected that they would stand still, and allow these designs to be carried into execution, without making any resistance? They had felt the rigors of slavery, and had endured them too long to allow them ever to be forgotten. They were now in possession of their freedom, and were not to be suddenly deprived of it without making one effort in its defence.

Happily for the cause of liberty, before the French could make the necessary arrangement, the negro leaders, who from the first suspected their designs, discovered the real object of the expedition. Enraged at the injustice of those in whose honor they had hitherto placed the utmost confidence, they instantly flew to arms; and the negro soldiers with the cultivators were once more compelled to unite in defending their

rights, against the designs of men who had acknowledged their freedom, and solemnly sworn to be its protectors. The French finding that nothing could be effected by stratagem, and that the plans on which they had confidently relied for success were defeated; now determined to subdue and enslave the objects of their oppression by force of arms; feeling assured that the negroes, though their superiors in number, could not long withstand the skill and bravery of their own troops.

Disappointed in this expectation also, and regarding the blacks as a species of brutes, they had immediate recourse to such methods of cruelty and death, as would be selected only for the purpose of exterminating a dangerous and destructive race of animals; to barbarities worse than had ever before stained the annals of any people pretending to the character of civilization. All the male negroes and mulattoes they could lay their hands on, were murdered in the most shocking manner. Five hundred of these unfortunate beings were at one time shot near Cape François; and an equal number were, on another occasion, coolly massacred in view of the negro army. Thousands were carried on board the vessels in the harbor, and were either suffocated in the holds, or thrown overboard in chains and drowned. Even these methods failed to accomplish the horrid purposes of these blood-thirsty tyrants—till at length they had

recourse to the dreadful expedient of hunting and destroying the unhappy victims of their rage by blood-hounds.—These animals, pursuing the negroes to the parts of the mountains inaccessible to their no less bloody employers, easily gained their retreats, and devoured all who were so unfortunate as to be discovered. Such of the black prisoners as had evinced the greatest zeal and activity in defence of liberty, were selected from the rest; and on Sundays were dragged to a spot chosen for the purpose, and in sight of thousands of spectators, were thrown to those terrible animals and torn to pieces. In short, the attempt was founded in injustice, commenced by treachery, and conducted in a manner the most inhuman and barbarous.

To the arms, the treachery, and the cruelty of the French, what had the negroes to oppose? By what means were a body of men, in a great measure ignorant of all that was necessary to a successful enterprise, trained in the school of slavery, and knowing little except its rigors, frequently destitute of a sufficient number of leaders, and but ill-furnished with arms, to contend successfully with troops trained to every mode of warfare, and stimulated by a resolution to subdue, or to exterminate.

But however hopeless their case for some time appeared, they determined on resistance as long as there should be any left capable of opposing

their enemies. They first united in one body and entered into a common vow, either to expel their oppressors, or to die in the attempt. "La Liberté cù la mort" was their rallying cry; and though there appeared little or no prospect of success, they ever felt animated by the conviction, that they fought in the best of causes—the cause of freedom and independence. Right and justice were on their side; they felt it so, and it rendered them unconquerable. In the early part of the contest, they were deprived by treachery of their ablest leader; but his loss served only to increase their rage, and consequently to render them more formidable. During this severe struggle, they displayed a degree of courage and firmness, with a patient endurance of privations and sufferings, far above their condition and character. At the same time they sought and found opportunities of revenge; and the cruelties which they perpetrated were equal in number and atrocity,* to those committed by their oppressors. But it will be remembered that they were, in the first instance, compelled to take up arms in their defence, by the unjust designs of the French; and were then urged by their subsequent barbarities, to avail them of every occasion and mode of retaliation. They fought for liberty; and if they found that the only way to secure it was through blood, it was

* If equal in number, certainly not in atrocity.—E.D.

an alternative to which their enemies had reduced them. Nor will those who have paid attention to the circumstances of the war hesitate to consider the French as chiefly chargeable with the horrors, cruelties, and massacres of this sanguinary contest.

After a doubtful and desperate struggle, success crowned the exertions of the Haytians.—They expelled their foes, secured their rights, and took possession of the island, which their toils and sufferings had purchased.—*Harvey.*

Our readers are now competent to judge for themselves, whether the colored inhabitants of this island are capable of self-support and self-government. Will they not feel ashamed of their own nation, when they reflect that it has refused to recognise the independence of Hayti, or to hold any diplomatic intercourse with this interesting people, while at the same time our statesmen and orators have been perpetually declaiming in favor of the liberty of the Poles, the Greeks, the South Americans, and the Texans! The Haytians may say, "I am black, but comely; look not upon me, because I am black, because the sun hath looked upon me: my mother's children were angry with me." Solomon's Song, i, 5, 6. "The white man has no pre-eminence by nature, above the black . . . All original difference between men, so far as the

constitution of their nature is concerned, are the result of accidental causes, of climate, of soil, of local peculiarities."—*Professor Stuart*.

PRESENT CONDITION OF ST. DOMINGO.

IN 1831, was published in London, the journal of a traveller in Hayti. See Jay's Inquiry, page 178. "Being aware," he says, "that this city (*Port au Prince*) had very recently suffered greatly by fire, I expected to see an unsightly waste of ruins and decay; but the lots are rebuilt, and many a splendid and substantial edifice, surpassing those to be seen in the city of Kingston, in Jamaica, has arisen as the first fruits of the security which property enjoys by the recognised independence of Hayti."

The traveller states that he made an excursion just out of the town to the little cottage settlements on the side of the mountain above the city. When the island was under the control of the whites, this neighborhood was comparatively neglected, and never cultivated as it is now. "At present they are covered with a thousand small settlements, appropriated to coffee, provisions, fruit, and vegetables."

Port au Prince is at this day, in style, and and one may say splendor, far superior to what it was in the colonial period of its history. The

journal speaks of the scene presented to the view of the traveller, who quits the city to journey on the highway to the mountains. "On the road he meets a multitude of cultivators coming to the city market, with horses and asses loaded with provisions. He will see wagons with produce drawn by hardy and healthy cattle. If he departs from the high road, and turns to the right hand, through one of the woodland paths, he will find himself entering into open grounds, covered with verdant fields; he will see traces everywhere visible of *renewed* cultivation; mansions *re-erected*; aqueducts *reconducting* their streams to irrigate the land; the sound of water-mills at work; cottages no longer deserted, but tenanted by laborers once more issuing from them, to gather in the harvest of the teeming soil."

"The island of Jamaica does not exhibit a plantation better established than Chateau Blond; whether we consider the resources of the land, or the *mechanical* economy by which these resources are commanded, it is a splendid establishment."

"To me, who have had an opportunity from the day of my birth, *and long residence in a slave colony*, of forming by *comparison* a correct estimate of this people's advancement, the general quiet conduct and respectful behaviour of all classes here, publicly and privately, is a matter exciting great surprise."

Vice Admiral Fleming stated, before the committee of the British Parliament, that "the Haytians appeared to him the happiest, best fed, and most comfortable negroes he had ever seen: better off even than in the Caraccas: infinitely better than in Jamaica; there was no comparison between them. . . . They now feed themselves, and *they export provisions*, which neither the French nor the Spaniards had ever done before."

Admiral Fleming stated that he rode about very much, and saw no marks of destitution any where; the country seemed improving, and trade increasing. There was a better police in Hayti, than in the new South American states; the roads much better; a regular post established; the government one quite worthy of a civilized people; the negroes all working in the fields.

Mr. Jeremie, late first president of the royal court of St. Lucia, informs us, that in St. Domingo "is found a *happy, flourishing, and contented peasantry*, engaged in the cultivation of their own small freeholds; and as these persons acquire capital, they form larger establishments, and are gradually rising. This proves that the general wants of the community are supplied, and, if well governed, that community must soon acquire strength, and rise to importance." *Essays on Colonial Slavery*, 1832, p. 63.

The amount of the following articles, im-

ported in 1832, was estimated, says Mr. Jeremie, as follows, viz.:

Coffee, . . .	50,000,000 lbs.
Cotton, . . .	1,500,000 "
Tobacco, . . .	500,000 "
Cocca, . . .	500,000 "
Dye Wood, . . .	5,000,000 "
Tortoise Shell, . . .	12,000 "
Mahogany, . . .	6,000,000 feet.
Hides, . . .	80,000.

p. 927.

The quantity of sugar exported in 1832 is not stated; but in 1826 it amounted to 32,864 lbs.; and it should be recollected, that about twenty years before, not an ounce of that article was manufactured on the island!—p. 926.

The imports into France, in 1831, from Hayti, **EXCEEDED IN VALUE** the imports from Sweden, Denmark, Holland, Portugal, Austria, or China.—p. 637.

Cotton manufactures, to the amount of 6,828,576 yards, were exported from Great Britain to Hayti in 1831, being about one-tenth the number of yards exported in the same time to the United States.—p. 446.

Intelligence of the agriculture of Hayti has been received, to near the close of 1836. In every point of view it does great credit to Hayti. From the "Reports made by the commanding

officers of Arrondissemens to the President of Hayti, on Agriculture," we extract the following :

"Agriculture is now found further advanced than it has ever been. . . . The crop of cotton has been very abundant. . . . much attention is paid to the raising of cattle."—*Report of General Riche.*

"The highways and roads, public and private, are in good condition."—*Commune of St. Jean.*

"There have been driven from this commune, since the commencement of the month of August last, 1,053 oxen."—*Commune of Lamaitte.*

"The 'total' of General Bonnet's report, reducing French *carreaux* to English acres, is as follows: 'Number of acres of land cultivated—in canes, 802; in cotton, 14,021; in coffee, 5,512; in tobacco, 3; in rice, 879; in Indian corn, 669; in millet, 267; in bananas, 344; in potatoes, 307; in manioc, 37; in *ignames* or *tayaux*, 90.' According to the '*observations*' interspersed through the report, it appears that the quantity of provisions must be much greater than would appear from the above, for it is the practice to plant corn, bananas, potatoes, &c., between the rows of cotton and coffee. This report closes with the following summary :

“*A Summary of the exportations from the port of St. Marc in the year 1835.*”

Products exported.	By foreign ships.	Coast-wise.	Total.
Coffee,	933,888 lbs.	333,058	1,270,946
Cotton,	646,935 do.	303,961	950,896
Mahogany,	1,835,508 ft.	48,025	2,283,533
Logwood,	208,455 lbs.	10,000	218,455
Gayac,	2,155 do.	—	2,155
Ox hides,	195 do.	196	391
Ox horns,	500 do.	300	800
Cacao,	42,085 do.	—	42,085
Tobacco,	101,430 do.	—	101,530
Product of the salines for 1835, 11,506 bls. of salt.			

General Receipts of the Treasury.

By customs,	\$72,838 43
By patents, stamps, and rents,	12,911 95
	<hr/>
	\$85,750 38.”

A writer in one of the newspapers, recently says, “Slaveholders and Colonizationists have long delighted to appeal to St. Domingo, as a triumphant proof, that free negroes *wont work*, and of course, as a triumphant argument against emancipation. Now, it so happens, that notwithstanding our negro hatred, we have a pretty extensive commerce with “the idle and worthless population” of St. Domingo, to use the language of Col. Stone, and it so happens, that this idle and worthless population are among our best customers.

“In most other countries we have ministers, or at least consuls, to watch over the interests of our merchants; but to send a minister or con-

sul to St. Domingo, would be so revolting to the feelings of our Southern brethren, that they would probably *threaten* to dissolve the Union, and so our merchants are left to take care of their own interests there. It may be useful to compare the *amount* of those interests with the amount of their interests in certain other countries, where we have consuls, and in some instances, ministers.

“The following comparative view is taken from a statement of the value of the imports and exports of the United States, for the year ending, 30th September, 1835, recently laid before Congress, by the Secretary of the Treasury:—

	<i>Exports to.</i>	<i>Imports from</i>
HAYTI,	\$1,815,812	\$2,347,556
Prussia,	55,745	38,543
Russia,	585,447	2,395,245
Sweden and Norway,	516,238	1,285,178
Denmark,	323,300	121,000
Dutch East Indies,	1,444,290	800,388
Belgium,	748,222	341,967
Ireland,	403,604	542,896
British East Indies,	754,058	1,697,893
Spain,	655,961	1,295,678
Portugal,	270,305	547,974
Italy,	285,941	1,457,977
Swedish West Indies,	86,355	31,330
Danish West Indies,	1,457,196	1,282,902
Dutch West Indies,	481,340	403,542
British West Indies,	1,152,347	1,838,227

It thus appears that of all the above countries, the one inhabited by free negroes buys the most from us, and with the exception of Russia, sells the most to us. Surely, this is a strange result for a people who *won't work*, and for a country in which the law forbids the use of the lash.

In a letter from Hayti, dated Port au Prince, November 6, 1836, the writer says, "the public documents I had the pleasure of transmitting to you, have almost superceded the necessity of my answering the remainder of your very interesting inquiries; but I deem it important to say to you, that the morals of the people are better than they formerly were. There are not less than fifteen male and female schools in this city; also a national college, in which sciences, languages, drawing, music, &c., are taught. We have also a Lancasterian school, in which the first principles of grammar, arithmetic, &c., are taught, and a medical school with a good faculty. These last are national schools, supported by the government.

"There is also a very great improvement in the mode of building. The buildings erected of late, do great credit to the architects and city; indeed, they far surpass the ancient French mode of building."—*Emancipator*, March 2, 1837.

No many years ago, the master of an American vessel, who had visited different ports in Europe and the United States, stated to the wri-

ter of this tract, that the custom house at Cape Haytian was under as good regulation, if not better, than the custom houses of London and New York. "The officers of the custom were all black men," said he, "and yet the order, correctness, and despatch of business, were remarkable, equalling any thing of the kind I ever saw."

"This interesting people have shown to the world," says a foreign writer, "for forty years, that black men can govern themselves, creditably maintain all the relations of civil society among themselves, and with other states, and besides paying a large indemnity to France for their independence—which they never should have submitted to—place themselves in the enviable situation of having 'a happy peasantry, a country's pride,' and having an exchequer clear of debt, which many older states cannot boast."

The state papers of the Republic of Hayti, have ever been distinguished for the ability with which they are written; and the gentlemen from that island, who have visited the United States on business, or for other purposes, have well supported the character the republicans of Hayti have established among civilized nations. Many of these individuals are men of refinement, education, and wealth. Yet, shame to this sister Republic! we refuse to recognise her independence, or to establish commercial or diplomatic relations with her government. And when her respectable citizens visit our shores, they are

treated in such a manner that they seldom repeat their visits.

“The existence of slavery among us,” says Mrs. Child, “prevents the recognition of Haytian independence. That republic is fast increasing in wealth, intelligence, and refinement. Her commerce is valuable to us, and might become much more so. But our northern representatives have never even made an effort to have her independence acknowledged, because a colored ambassador would be so disagreeable to our prejudices.”

Two years since three colored gentlemen, from Port au Prince, one of them the son of the secretary of state, visited the city of New York on commercial business. They were noble looking young men, and came to establish some commercial relations. They could not procure lodgings at any Hotel in the city, and felt very indignant at the treatment they received. They carried back many of the doubloons they brought to this country to invest in goods, and were equally astonished and wounded that the circumstance of their complexion exposed them to so many inconveniences and insults, in a land boasting of its free institutions, its “liberty and equality.”

In the Journal of Commerce, the following extract of a letter has been published. The writer, from his ungenerous hint about *getting rid* of our colored fellow-citizens, is obviously not an

abolitionist, and therefore not to be suspected of any prejudices *in favor* of the black republic.

“I have never seen any government *really free* before. . . . Every colored person is a citizen from the moment of his arrival, and entitled, upon application to the commandant, to nine acres of good land for himself, and as much for his family. . . . The population as yet hardly amounts to a million, but there is room for ten times that number, besides all the black and colored population of the United States; and being so near, it would be well to get rid of them in that way, seeing that they bid fair to be very quiet and peaceable neighbors. You would hardly believe that all the cash remittances to the Cape and Port au Prince, a distance of nearly three hundred miles, through lonely woods, rugged precipices and deep rivers, are conveyed in the shape of doubloons by an *unarmed footman*, and that no instance of any failure or interruption is on record. The government may fairly be said to put all others to shame, by accomplishing without any apparent coercion, what all others have attempted to accomplish in vain, by complicated legislation.

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