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—THE—

Weekly Discourse;

CONTAINING

SPIRITUAL SERMONS

BY THE GUIDES OF

Mrs. Cora L. V. Richmond.



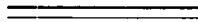
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VOLUME 3

OF THE

WEEKLY DISCOURSE

COMMENCES WITH THIS NUMBER.



PLEASE SEND YOUR SUBSCRIPTIONS
IMMEDIATELY.

THE THREE M'S:

MAMMON, MILLIONAIRES, AND MURDER.

DELIVERED AT CHICAGO, SUNDAY, MARCH 4, 1888.

INVOCATION.

Infinite and All-Wise God; ever bountiful, ever perfect Deity; Source of all love and knowledge, and wisdom; Creator; Ruler; Guide of the universe, beneath whose loving care all souls must ever be; Thou who guideth them in the pathway of earthly life, through the darkness of time in the material senses, even unto the light of Thy truth: we would praise Thee evermore. Although immured in time and sense Thy children turn unto eternity; although encompassed around about with darkness and gloom, with death and error, they know that the light of truth is within Thee, and they turn unto the altar of the spirit to find it there. In their feebleness they would seek Thy strength; in their ignorance they would seek Thy knowledge, and in their error they would turn unto Thy truth, knowing that Thou art all truth; and amid their faults and failings they would turn unto Thy perfectness, knowing that it encompasses them around about with the strength of mighty pinions. Oh, may those who are in the shadow of sorrow, the sorrow of death, turn to Thee and know that the surpassing light and life of the spirit may be theirs; that those who have passed from mortal sight become guardian angels and ministering spirits while they walk in the valley. May those who are in the shadow of earthliness learn that the light is to forget all self and turn unto those who are oppressed and downtrodden. May the message of freedom and of joy bring the uplifting of the spirit that no thralldom can touch and no tyranny enslave. But oh, unto those in the deeper shadow of mammon, who are hedged around with the darkness and the encompassing walls of selfishness may there come the light of truth and all the prayers of those who see the light, until they shall be released from their prisons. May every heart praise Thee for the blessings already received and turn confidently to those blessings that are not yet known; well aware that Thy love hath provided all. Amen.

DISCOURSE.

"No man can serve two masters; * * * * * Ye cannot serve God and Mammon."—Jesus.

"Though I have the wealth of Cræsus, and forget the gods I am impoverished beyond all recovery."—Plato.

"He who has the power of worldliness may serve unrighteousness, the Prince of the world, but he cannot serve God."—From the Arabic.

In every age, from the wisdom of the Osirian religion in Egypt down to the interpretation of the teaching of Christ, we have the admonition against the worship of Mammon. In the highest period, almost, of Grecian civilization after the law giver had given his perfect laws unto the Greeks, Lycurgus, at once the patriarch and administrator of the laws, and almost the father of his people, made them promise that they would not alter the laws for two hundred years. In those laws was the exclusion of gold as the standard of wealth from the nation, from the people whom he loved; as he believed that gold, (or the love of it) that is the standard of valuation in human life, was the source of all human misery. When they had pledged him that they would not alter the law for two hundred years, or until his return from a long journey, he consulted the oracles at Delphos and finding that they approved of those laws he expatriated himself, becoming a voluntary exile, dying an exile that he might not give any signal for altering the laws by his return. But the Greeks, however, were made of common human clay, and the love of mammon was found not to be in gold as an ore, nor any precious stones, nor in any glittering stuff, but in the heart of man. As neither Lycurgus, nor any other law-giver, has ever found a remedy for that evil, save alone in conquering power of the spirit of goodness, so nations in all ages have been obliged to grope their way through the darkness of mammon; having such light as inspiration, true philosophy and the intelligence that common experience has given man. It is on the basis of that common intelligence, it is to appeal to that high standard of philosophy, and to reach that higher degree of inspiration that we speak to you this night. Solemn events have occurred in your midst within the past six months; there is no secular paper that you can handle that does not at once take hold of your sympathy and your terror, of your policy and even of the laws of your government, that ought to surround shelter and protect, but which seem to be powerless; so that we are obliged to return to the teaching of Pythagoras when he said, "the moment man begins to make laws to protect his freedom he is not worthy of liberty." Shall we be obliged to take the standards of the highest ancients who concluded that, who-soever is weak enough to need the terror of the law should be imprisoned before hand.

All this however is but prefatory. This much is certain; under whatever name you choose to call the ruling power in the world, when it is analyzed it is Mammon. Mammon is the god of riches, and at the present time is the most potent power; that which opens all doors, that which gains access to all courts, that which makes favor with kings, potentates and powers, that which encircles the world, that which holds nations in its thrall; that which all the world is pursuing, or if not being able to pursue is sighing to pursue, is mammon. It is not called by this name; riches, wealth, influence, affluence, and a great many other terms that have modified the meaning of this word have been placed upon the vocabulary as an easy sliding scale from the banditti and marauders that formed the terrors of the ancient civilization from which you descended, to the freebooter, the conqueror and at last the successful speculator who forms the present typical standard of the gatherer of human riches; but whatever the term may be, one and all, rich and poor, high and low, bend the knee to this god; Mammon.

If into this hall, Spiritualists though many of you are, there should suddenly appear a millionaire there would be more of a flutter than if an angel of light should appear in bodily form; the millionaire would have worldly influence, the angel of light might find out some of your shadows. If into any society wealth, in the personality of any individual, enters, and there is not absolute boorishness accompanying it, the wealth is welcome, even though there may be a lack of those graces that should adorn true society; the lack is overlooked because of the wealth. While it is the boast of many select circles in the large centers of so-

ciety in Metropolitan cities of this country, and in Europe, that wealth has no power, we understand quite well that if they who would be members of those circles are poor they are not received, they are not considered influential. Intelligence and wealth may go hand in hand and the latter be secondary, but intelligence and poverty never.

If this is too sweeping a statement we give you liberty to correct it if you can. If you find it to be false in any worldly experience or enterprise that you may undertake, if you desire to gain position or favor of others, or aught that you wish to accomplish in the world, if you find that this standard is not the correct one please inform us; what it may be, with the single individual, with small groups, with coteries of artists, students, philosophers, even with some who breathe the name of religion, we do not declare; wealth may not seem to be dominant, but as it is the lever that moves the world let us see what ought to be done with it; what restrictions ought to be placed upon it; in what manner mammon should be made to serve the world instead of being served by mankind.

If man is the inheritor of the earth, if riches and position are his, not only by his inheritance but by his toil, then that which makes the standard of humanity lower than the standard of gold enslaves man and he no longer rules the earth. If mammon under any name is to be set above humanity then we might cast aside all claims to superior intelligence in man, and place him on the level with the clod and like the Egyptians erect a golden calf, Apis, and worship there; or like the wandering tribes of Israel in the wilderness, albeit representing the wanderings of mankind everywhere, (we mean wandering from the unknown God, from the promised land of safety, of strength, and spiritual light,) and build those images that Egypt has set the example of. No need, however, to do this they are already builded, and men are worshipping there.

As Mammon represents all power in the world; then if man places a scepter in his hand and a crown upon his head, builds for him a throne and gives him all the kingdoms of the earth why should he complain if enslaved by that which he has created, or if he is tyrannized over by that which he has placed voluntarily in power? There should be no complaint if tyranny is exercised, and if it works devastation and ruin, nor is any human being responsible for taking possession of the power which is thus vested in Mammon, so long as that is the dominating power in the world.

— If intelligence, or love, or truth, or justice, by some possible miracle should be the mortal standard controlling mankind does any one suppose that there would be any jealousy because of too great intelligence, any danger of too much justice, any absolute crying out against too much goodness and truth? Whatever man places as the highest point of attainment the whole world will endeavor to reach.

If teachers, philosophers, dreamers, and even Messiahs are sent to lead mankind from this error, there will be only a few to recognize them but the many will still turn aside. The need in the world is to choose which the world shall worship: God or Mammon. Not the God afar off, not the God referred to as angry and revengeful, but the God of right and truth, of love and justice, who has stamped His image upon the human heart, and made there the revelation of His *love*. If the God of humanity, that wisdom, that truth, that justice, that aspiration and love, is to be cast aside then let there be no more striving to attain the highest and best: let all turn with one accord and follow in the grand procession, let it be led by Mammon unto the altar and shrine of Moloch! No matter how many human beings are sacrificed, how much human virtue is betrayed, how much is slaughtered of innocence and youth, through temptation the honor of middle age, still if it be the god whom mankind must serve let us make no pretense of serving another God. But what can be the meaning of all these spires in Christendom that point in silent admonition unto heaven; why all these anthems and hymns of praise; where is the room for the Sermon on the Mount and the Golden Rule; who authorized Mammon to place upon his principal temple in London—the Royal exchange:—"The Earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof"? Then

Mammon is lord after all, and these things belong unto him. If we serve Mammon let us do so with mind, body and spirit, or whatever takes the place of the spirit, let there be no semblance, no hypocrisy, no pretense of serving God; and if in Christendom Mammon builds the temples of worship let us call them by their right names and say in each, this temple is dedicated to the worship of Mammon whom we serve six days in the week and only faintly deny him on the seventh. After all the plan of the bandit, the highway robber, the thief is the most honorable; they make no pretension to virtue. If hypocrisy be an offense then surely Christendom stands arraigned before the eyes of God and before the eyes of the angels; he who does not hide his crime may be more easily pardoned. Was it not the greatest sinner that was pardoned by Christ, and if such a one repents may he not be nearer the kingdom of heaven than the Pharisees, those who cry "Lord, Lord" and serve Mammon?

There are many today who cry out against millionaires. There is great excitement just now in your nation over the investigation of monopolies and "trusts." It has become rather a doubtful experiment for any man to express an opinion in favor of monopoly. Some must be made the scape goats for the worship of Mammon. If a victim is to be sacrificed unto Moloch, why not a millionaire or two? But be sure this has no real meaning: the millionaire is the splendid flowering out, the blossoming, the fruition of your kind of civilization. If he builds railways, if he owns mines, if he creates monopolies, they are the results of the seeds that you have planted; and you have no more right to attack him individually than you have to attack the fruitage of a tree that turns into bitterness with you because *you* do not reap the fruitage. We say that the most splendid genius is required to seize the reins of the popular current of thought, of the present system of commerce, of the present form of legislation, and convert them all into the one man, or ten man, or hundred man power. This the monopolist has done. It is the same kind of genius that the small tradesman and the petty barterer find use, only it is magnified; it is the same kind of genius that starts a thriving trade upon a corner of the street and by degrees becomes the possessor of that which should be distributed among others. The millionaire is the accredited servant of Mammon; he retains in his possession the wealth that others have earned for which he gives no equivalent. The same is true of the robber the same is true of the bandit, the same *was* true of the pirate, but piracy has been run from the high seas because the commerce of nations has made it respectable, now there can be no competition. The Vikings who swept down from the Northern seas and were supposed to prey upon all civilized nations were nothing compared to this aggressive, all-sweeping, all-absorbing, all-conquering commerce of the Anglo Saxon race! What chance is there for piracy?

If upon sea and land the highest standard is success and the secondary standard, or the third, or tenth is honesty, honor, integrity, what can you expect? The law which is fashioned by a nation building its highest theories upon "thrift" upon gain, upon the realization of wealth must of necessity protect that wealth when it is won, and give that wealth the augmentation of its power; and the individualism which is encouraged in the acquirement of wealth must be protected when that wealth is gained. To cry out against a Gould or a Vanderbilt, excepting as an illustration of a system, is absurd. Cry out against whatever there is in your individual transactions that would make you Goulds and Vanderbilts if you had the ability. Your speculations are right because you never become millionaires, as a rule you fail, but theirs must be all wrong because they, taking the same methods, have succeeded, success brings jealousy as well as reverence. The man who has the courage to deal fraudulently in railroad bonds, in the public lands, or in any enterprise that involves millions, has also the strength and audacity to carry it through the courts of law.

As said before millionaires are the natural flowering out of the civilization of the highest nation in the world; the nation that has carried individual freedom, as it is called, to the degree of making wealth the tyrant over the freemen of this

land, leaving open the public domain for the possession and pilferage of capital, and making it possible that these transactions shall be protected in law.

The individuals whose natural tastes and instincts lead them in this direction, if the standard of public opinion should require that as they make this gold it shall be apportionated and used for the public good, if the standard was so exalted that those having genius in this direction might make it a benefit for mankind, those magnificent speculators could be made the benefactors of the race as they are sometimes, superficially, called to day, and their abilities turned in the right direction: as the man of science; as the poet; as the painter, and sculptor. But this age is not ripe, humanity needs instruction, and the world must understand the real issues and pursue the path which it intends to follow. The lesson is not to cry out against millionaires, but not to *create* millionaires, nor the spirit which can produce them, in a land where there is abundant for all.

He who serves gold whether successfully or otherwise, with all the strength and might of his nature; who, early and late, has no other master; who, finding that that dominates the world, pursues it with undivided aim; who gives up, perhaps, his comfort, home and family for this; who sacrifices all social enjoyments; and who, very often, at midnight is found in his counting room or pouring over his books at home to see what new device can bring added power; he who counts his acres by the thousands and gold by the millions; who has no dreams by night, no thoughts by day excepting their augmentation; he who can scarcely count the buildings that he owns, the long rows of palaces or hovels which he may have erected for men to live in; who is counting the profits he hopes to derive from these every day, week, and month; who performs his steady rounds, watching the fluctuations or misfortunes of those who are his tenants; who rides like the Irish landlord, miles to evict a tenant who cannot pay his rent; who uses all the authority of the law, crown or kingdom, upon one unprotected family; such an one as this is a slave of such degree as cannot be measured, while they are worshiped and envied of men, what poverty can compare with the poverty of such a nature? No tear of sympathy for the laboring man whose wife is sick, whose children are helpless; no thought of tenderness for him upon whose farm or house he holds a mortgage, which at a certain time matures; which he is waiting for as a bird of prey watching for its victim, nothing of this, but only the one possession the one love of gain that all the world may praise, and that even when he is dead constitutes his only passport into the "kingdom of rest!" If this is the standard of the world, then cry not out against the hardness of the landlords, against the atrocity of the mortgage, against the laws, that enable the strong to oppress the weak, against the long hours of labor, the brief hours of respite, and the small pay that comes to the laboring man; cry not out against "trusts" that absorb all the interests of commerce, manufactures, and all natural productions; they are but the spawn of the serpent which you have created.

If when your forefathers planted here the "Tree of Liberty," as it was called, (albeit, at whose roots the serpent of slavery twined itself in horror, but did not begin to be the serpent that has since crept in) had they dreamed that this serpent of policy, of obedience to Mammon, the yielding of the public revenues and the public resources of the country to control and subsidize legislation, would they not have turned away? When you contemplate this serpent you will not have to go back to the Garden of Eden nor the serpent of the Pharaohs to find that which enfolds humanity in its coils.

You have created millionaires, and this by methods known only to business; and, protected by the laws they can and do wrest the life blood out of the individual victims, and thus can turn the key in the door and keep little children toiling hour after hour for daily bread, and can in their great might cause women to faint and falter by the wayside, even in the earning of the small pittance which is called their daily wages: can by every device which Mammon knows how to invent, keep the reins of government on their side, the legislation on their side, the

courts on their side and there is no redress. Mammon being the power starvation is the result on one side and millionaires are the result on the other.

Into this stream of human life creeps a third element; an element which man would not be man if it did not intervene; that which stirs his passions, that which raises the spirit of rebellion, that which sometimes on a dark night in the far tropic regions or in the South, causes the slave who has become covered with the wounds of the lash and the brand, to rise up and slay his master. Insurrection is to be abhorred everywhere at all times, as is murder; but what makes insurrection possible is the existence of slavery. In civilized Christian communities there should be no need for any man to steal to gain his daily bread. Thieving should be made so impossible and unprofitable that no human genius should be tempted in that direction; but if courts of law render it respectable and legislation declares that one kind of robbery is lawful while another is censurable, what is there to keep the moral sense alive, or to check those turbulent dispositions that would rather steal and say so than starve; or perhaps than run the gauntlet of the kind of speculation that is considered respectable and fail, ending in madness or suicide? The bank defalcations and peculations that go on every day in your institutions of deposit and safety, are the result of the mighty tempter that exists, on the one hand in the form of the successful speculator, on the other in the form of the thief; and he who in his own person strives to be both falls between the upper and nether millstone and there is another victim to Moloch! While women are turned into the streets, and girls starve in garrets, and the thousands of men who walk the streets without labor, without being able to obtain it, are illustrations of what Mammon does; and if the storm of passions that beset human life, the temptations that surround mankind, and the injustice of this awful system shall come upon them, what wonder that there are deeds of violence? We do not say that the average among the, so called, criminal classes think in this manner; but there is a stolid kind of reasoning down in their hearts that makes them feel that, after all, there may not be so much difference between taking that which is not one's own without one knowing it, or taking it while the victim is writhing and tortured beneath the grasp that is upon him. The society that creates kings, riches, caste aristocracy, millionaires must also create murderers. There is but one step from mammon to murder.

If human life is placed beneath gold, as it is in the public opinion of all commercial lands, and especially in the public opinion of your own "enlightened" country, then what is there to stand between human passion and greed, and the life of an individual? It is no longer the law to hang a man for stealing but if a man in defence of his wealth slays another man the public opinion is on his side. He who would murder any man for gold must stand responsible for that thought of murder, no matter if the other man be a thief, and if for the storied treasures of years, even the small accumulation of a few years, any man can have the hardihood to desire the life of another, or the strength born of the worship of mammon to slay him who would deprive him of a small portion of his riches, what wonder that even that thought should spread like the fires that are blown abroad on a windy night, and murderers as well as thieves be born into your civilization?

We say that all who seek the property of others without just compensation are guilty of dishonesty; they may not know, it herein is their salvation; but even those who do know that they are violating the law in taking possession of another's property at night and who protect themselves against attack with murderous weapons do not always intend to kill.

It is a great mistake to empower the agents of the law, the police, or private citizens to take the life of even the lowest criminals. Lynch law is not supposed to be practiced in this country neither should the murder of the thief be permitted though he be caught in the act of stealing; remember it is a human life that is to be sacrificed, remember also that the one who sacrifices human life suffers the most.

Between the intent to kill and the actual killing Christ made no distinction; and yet, probably at this moment the whole community, and we fear a large number in this room, would join in the pursuit, search, killing or arrest and bringing to justice, as it is called, of a murderer, when they have no reproach for the wealthy man who sleeps each night with murderous weapons by his side, and sometimes slays members of his own household mistaking them for robbers! Against such a possible contingency or calamity the whole community should rise up, but no one does.

The spiritual value and moral strength of man is never to be protected by these means, and that which is the least valued of human possessions is to be found in the highest qualities of human nature.

In Mohammedan countries there is no need, in many portions, of locking the doors, or even closing them. The Christian is perfectly safe, his jewels, his money, his person, are sacred and secure; and these people, though lacking in many of the essential things that are considered necessary in civilization, do not rob one another. Christians bar their doors against each other; even father and son, brother and brother, friend and friend, in most business transactions require bonds and security; the human word has no value. When honesty is the basis, when integrity is the standard, when the highest moral excellence of the community is to be served, the servants that are lowest in the administration of justice will not be entrusted with the sanctity of human life.

Now having dealt with this theme from the human standpoint let us refer briefly to the spiritual, since, after all, human life is but short and the spiritual state must endure, that which has bearing upon that state must most interest mankind, not only here, for it is the spirit that makes up the life of existence, the home, the affections, the society that men keep, that which they serve and worship constitute their real life, but the raiment they weave for themselves in spirit life, the habitations that they build, these are to be considered most solemnly.

Supposing one should have a vision of one who had passed from earthly life, who had served mammon as the world serves it, with all the energy and strength of a strong nature had pursued mammon as the one aim, and in the acquisition of wealth had made that the one point of existence to which all else were secondary: supposing an humble individual should meet the spirit of that man walking in the shadow of the earth somewhere near the outward dwelling, but not very near, and should say: "Why! are you here?" And the answer should be: "yes, I could not get in to heaven and there is no hell, so I must be here." Pacing up and down, perhaps measuring the feet in front of the dwelling, or counting the acres or feet of land, arrayed in the shadow of that earthliness, it would not be an overdrawn picture. That which formerly occupied him makes his entire possessions, and the spirit, therefore, is draped and clothed in the habiliments that have been woven. No longer can the servants of Mammon be dictated to by that spirit, and heaven does not open to those that are earth-bound as yet, so that, after all, the grasping, and the winning, and the gaining, become also the sepulcher, for the time being, of the spirit. Seared and bowed in shadow he must ever be reaching out to phantoms that are unreal, counting the gold that is no longer his, but shadowy gold, viewing the dwellings that are no longer his, but dwellings that are shadowy, and walk in the shadow of his earthly possessions.

Take the spirit of the murderer: stained with blood, we grant, with passion, anger, bitterness, and hatred, and, perhaps, all that horror can engender on earth; in spirit there is no shadowy pursuit nor pursuing; he who seeks by violence to win any end must in turn recoil from himself; there is no doubt but he is also fettered; and between the victim and murderer who shall choose? The spirit, judging above the hearts and lives of men, finds palliation for each; none from the upper skies would turn from either in their shadow, to taunt them in their shade.

Who shall declare whether that which society has wrought on the one hand or on the other has preference in the kingdom of heaven. Dives is the typical spiritual illustration of worldliness, and between him and the heaven of the poor honest man was the impassable gulf of his own life; so between all who serve Mammon in a lesser or greater degree this gulf opens deep and wide. The spirit that has served Mammon all through its earthly life has no riches, unless some tender chord of love, some dream of his childhood, some prayer of loving wife or sainted mother in paradise, some father's bending smile or brother's strong uplifting, shall exist in the memory, where can be the beginnings of spiritual riches based upon the worship of Mammon while in the body?

Let us hope that the murderer in his cell, the millionaire in his shadows, the worshiper of Mammon enshrouded and earth-bound, and him who, though

not a worshiper, has out-vied the worship of Mammon in following perdition, that each of these shall find some place or treasure deeply hidden within the heart, where the memory of childhood days, the sound of children's voices or the voice of love, shall win them unto the higher estate. Meanwhile the spirit world bends above the Mammon worshiping earth in warning and in love.

For your own liberty, which you claim to prize, follow not Mammon; for your own intelligence, which is the divine crown and heritage of man, follow not and be not enslaved by Mammon; and for that spiritual state that bends above you lovingly this night, and in the voice of parent, sister, brother, or friend implores, by the shadows that each have borne, worship not Mammon and the shadow of the dust. For it is this, and this alone, that constitutes the hades of the spirit. Whosoever builds up the shrine of self, forgetting mankind, rears walls that separate him from his loved ones, even though the loved ones are near.

Turn unto that light, follow after the divinest gifts, reconstruct your laws upon the basis of the Golden Rule and the Sermon on the Mount, and then see how safe, free, and wise will be the nations of the earth.

THE PRAYER OF AGUR:

"GIVE ME NEITHER POVERTY NOR RICHES;"—PROV., 30, 8.

[IMPROMPTU POEM: THE SUBJECT BEING GIVEN BY A MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE.]

Give me neither poverty,
 Because it is abject and full of pain;
 Hard and thorny the paths must be,
 And fraught with many a heart-blood stain;
 And the pangs of hunger are deep and sore;
 Give me not poverty I implore:

And give me not riches; for the head
 That slumbers beneath the golden weight,
 Hath often sorrows deep, intense;
 And striving, and bitterness, and hate;
 And envious eyes are cast around
 Him whom riches hath enwound.

Give not poverty, for the child
 That is an outcast and in the cold,
 Knows not the tender love and mild
 That the home of comfort oft may hold;
 And children's tears are hard to bear,
 And heart-strings often must break with care.

Give not riches; for the heart
 Is tempted in the earthly state,
 And that which man in power may hold
 He oft mistakes that wealth makes him great;
 And riches have wings and may fly away.
 Give me something that will stay:

A contented mind, and loving heart,
 The treasures of home, and friends most dear,
 Wisdom and truth that will not depart,
 And courage of honest purpose here;
 Give the deeper treasures of the soul:
 The knowledge of truth divine and love;
 That which over the spirit and soul
 May hold its power in heaven above.

But if, O God, to gain that state
 I must have poverty and pain,
 Must reap through riches man's scorn and hate,
 Oh give me power still to attain
 The knowledge of what is highest and best;
 Give according to Thy love's behest.

BENEDICTION.

May the darkness of Mammon, which is earthliness, and the selfishness of the human spirit, give place to the light of love, until the world shall turn to the living Christ, and to all light of Truth forever.

BANNER x OF x LIGHT.

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