EASTON GAZETTE.

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From the N. Y. Courier and Enquirer.

MR. WEBSTER'S LECTURE ON CHINA.

MR FLETCHER WEBSTER lectured last evening to a densely crowded audience at the Tabernacle, upon the country, people and institutions of CHINA. Expressing at the outset the extreme difficulty of rendering an hour's discourse upon so vast and limitless a theme at all interesting, he proceeded to say, in presenting a narrative of the Legation of the United States with which he was connected, that they landed on the 22d of February, 1844, at Macao, a town upon the rocky promontory about a mile in width, which stretches into the bay which receives the Keang river seventy miles south of Canton,—resembling in situation Nahant, containing 20,000 inhabitants, and bearing to the empire of China about the same proportion that a small town on Cape Sable, at the southern extremity of Florida, would bear to the United States. He said the town was an ancient Portuguese settlement,—the Portuguese hiring it, at a settled ground-rent from the Chinese, having three forts and an army of 400 men; each nation has a custom-house, and each exercises municipal authority over its own people.—The principal street is very pleasant; the others are about eight feet wide, exceedingly dirty and disagreeable.

Next to Russia, China is the greatest Empire in the world. Extending from the 18th to the 52d parallel of latitude, and from the 143rd to the 70th meridian of longitude, its boundaries are those of nature only, having on the north a frontier of 3000 miles, on the Pacific one of 2000, and stretching to the north and west beyond Persia, and to a limit as yet unknown. It seemed not at all improbable, in Mr. Webster's judgment, that all the smaller States even to the Caspian sea, are in some respect, part and parcel of the Chinese Empire:—not that their laws were identical, for as is seen in the case of England, Ireland and Scotland, such identity is not essential even in the same Empire. But a similarity of customs, laws, &c., make it probable at least, that these States are for certain purposes subject to the Government of China. The empire covers the whole centre of Asia. It has a superficial extent of over five millions of square miles,—more territory than would belong to the United States, should they stretch from 25 to 51 degrees of latitude,—embracing Texas, Oregon, and a great portion of Mexico and Canada, and from the Atlantic to the Pacific in breadth. Thus is *one-tenth* of the land surface of the globe, under the sway of a single power. And yet the Chinese are not unambitious of conquest; for more than a hundred years ago, one of her generals boasted that, but for the rigor of the season, he would have carried his arms to Rome!

And the whole of this vast region, except in a single spot, the town of Mamatchin, on the Russian border, is impenetrable to foreigners—for even the five open seaports on the Pacific, are only resting places for those who trade in that region, and all entrance to foreigners beyond is strictly prohibited.

At the north end of Macao is the cave where the Portuguese poet, CAMOENS, is said to have composed his poem called the *Lusiad*. It is a romantic spot, formed by down fallen rocks, and upon it, with execrable taste, the Portuguese have erected a wooden cupola and a leaden bust. At the south end is a Chinese temple, situated in a spot equally romantic, but built and adorned with a classic and exquisite taste. Here we saw the *Moon Gate*, as it is called, a circular gateway opening from one enclosure to another. Here too, are granite dragons, each with a large loose ball of stone in his mouth, which must have been carved from the solid mass, as it could not have been introduced from without. In this temple, were altars, idols, metal pans, on which incense was burned, flowers of gold and silver leaf, and a great variety of ornaments, all left open to our inspection, and even to plunder, had we chosen thus to abuse the hospitality extended to us. All the idols were female, as the temple was dedicated to the Goddess of the Sea.

There are in China *three* chief systems of religion, that of Confucius, Louisa and Boodha. The former is for the more learned of the Chinese, being in fact rather a moral code, and a most admirable one too, than a religious creed. The second differs from this but little; and the Boodhist religion is for the lowest and least educated classes. There is no State religion in the Empire. The Emperor is a Boodhist, or follower of Fo; but he is also a follower of Confucius.—China is tolerant of all religions; and it was only in consequence of the quarrels and bad conduct of its professors, that Christianity was ever forbidden. The early Cathelic priests were extremely well received—their learning and science were highly esteemed; their teachings were allowed, members even of the royal family were converted to their doctrines; and there was a good prospect that the empire would become converted to Christianity. But the priests divided into two parties, one forbidding, and the other allowing the Chinese to pay worship to their ancestors; the Pope issued his bull and decided the bitter controversy; and the Emperor, indignant at this presumption, forbid to all his subjects the profession of Christianity under penalty of death. His anger did not subside, nor were its effects removed, until the conclusion of treaties by the Americans and the French. By the 17th article of the treaty with this country, we are allowed to build hospitals, cemeteries, and churches, in each of the five free ports. And without any breach of confidence, it may, and in justice to *Whang*, with whom our negotiation on this point was carried on, it should be stated, that he consented to this stipulation with the utmost readiness, and out of respect to Dr. Parker, with whose aid the negotiation was carried forward, and who is highly and very justly esteemed by the Chinese.

The Boodhist is the religion of the lowest class—a class which requires something to strike the senses, which is not capable of rising to abstract notions of the Divinity, but which must have visible and tangible objects of worship. Their temples, like the Catholic churches in Macao, have decorations, pictures, &c. They worship the Virgin mother—make prayers for the dead, have nuns and monks, and petition for everything, from deliverance of their friends from purgatory, to a handsome wife or a rich and worthy husband. Beside every shop is an idol of the god of wealth,—and every house has a god of longevity, to which devout and daily prayers are offered. Most of them are utterly ignorant of the existance of a future state; but they receive instruction gladly.

In the streets, the Chinese appear just as they are depicted. They walk with a swagger, and their long tails present an almost irresistible temptation to seize and pull them over. While the legation were amusing themselves with looking about town, it was announced that they were about to be visited by four high officers of Canton. Every thing was prepared for their reception On the day appointed, a terrible discord was heard; two ill looking fellows, with wire caps, one with a whip and the other with an axe, were seen leading the procession. These were executioners, who always accompany high officers.—Then came some twenty dirty, ragged soldiers; next men on wretched ponies; then a band of music; and finally the sedan chairs, on which were borne four large fine looking persons, who proved to be the officers. They entered, with their caps on—shook their hands at us, and the chief presented the letter. It was read by the interpreter; and after a short silence, they commenced the conversation by asking our names.—Informed upon this point, they next asked our *ages*. Our guests ate but little, but they evinced a wondrous fondness for those barbarian drinks, champagne and cherry bounce. They spoke in an astonishingly loud tone of voice, easily heard in the street;—and as each was required by etiquette upon every toast to empty his glass, they soon became as elevated as their voices. Civilities were exchanged with the greatest urbanity. It is the fashion for each to help himself; and the very highest mark of regard is for one to seize a morsel with his own chop-stick, and thrust it down the throat of the friend whom he desires most especially to honor. As they are by no means *nice* in their eating, this we would gladly have excused; but there was no escape, and all that was left us was retaliation, which we accordingly practised. After an hour's entertainment we retired to the verandah;—and here we were favored with more of their delicate attentions, for they began to examine our *apparel*, piece by piece, and with the utmost curiosity. As Dr. Parker informed us that this was the very *acme* of politeness, we submitted and reciprocated with all due diligence.—After two hours of this intellectual converse our guests retired.

Any thing like pleasant and instructive intercourse with the Chinese, its of course impossible. They are the reverse of us in every thing. They are ignorant of every thing that we know, and they desire no information which we possess. Our Minister resolved to acquire the Manchou Tartar, the language of the court: and Mr. W. was despatched to Canton for a Tartar, as as teacher. The voyage is pleasant—made in boats kept and hired for the purpose, and very prettily furnished and managed with the greatest dexterity. Smaller boats by which the others, which cannot approach the land, are reached are constantly kept by women who thus obtain a living, and who pass their lives on board. These boats are numerous and of all sizes, many of them are fitted up so as to appear like immense blocks of houses floating on the water. Shops of all kinds are kept in them and thus at least 300,000 persons obtain a living—born upon the water, living there all their lives and finally dying on board their boats. About fifty miles above Macao is the mouth of the river. Forts stand on either side, and on Tiger island in the centre. These forts look formidable but are soon seen to be quite useless. They are simply walls, open at the top, and not placed upon the summit of the hill—so that they are easily commanded from the top. They have numerous port holes as large each of them as a barn door, and no guns at all are mounted.

The population of China is very variously estimated. The Chinese accounts have not been received as correct, and Mr. Webster said he could not but think injustice had been done them. They have every means of ascertaining the actual population; and when we compare the asserted population of that Empire, with that of Western nations, there can be no good reason for withholding credit from them. France, for instance with a surface of 200,000 square miles, has 39,000,000 of people,—or 150 to each square mile. Her soil, climate, &c., are no more favorable than those of China; nor are her people more industrious, frugal or temperate.—China proper, is as fertile and as well cultivated as France. Its Southern portion produces two crops a year; and it was as well tilled when Cæsar conquered Gaul, as now. Her people are the most industrious and frugal in the world. For 200 years they have not heard of war; marriage is encouraged and emigration is strictly prohibited. China proper is thus capable of maintaining a population eight times that of France. In Chinese Tartary, the people are more nomadic, and are of course comparatively sparse. Suppose then that this part is peopled two-thirds as densely as Russia, which has 20 to the square mile. If China proper is as dense France it would have 240,000,000; & Chinese Tartary 70 millions more, making 310,000,000 in all. Or giving to all alike a density of one third that of France, the population would exceed 250,000,000.—These accounts are very large and seem almost incredible, but when the facts of the case and the means the government has of acquiring information are considered, they will not be deemed beyond belief.

Canton is built upon low ground; hills are on the east, and a Tartar station commands the city. The population is variously reported from 500,000 to a million. The streets are seldom over eight feet wide and the houses are low and dark. It is hard to distinguish the city proper from the suburbs; and so closely are the walls interwoven with the dwellings that they can scarcely be recognised. The factories for the foreign merchants are on the banks of the river, and are much the finest buildings, except the temples, that meet the eye.

Mr. Webster said that he found a Tartar—not a native but a Chinese scholar,—and secured his services as teacher. He noticed at once, in his manner, great perturbation; and this increased from day to day, until at last he did not come at all except to explain, that he feared he should lose his head for teaching Chinese to foreigners, and to insist upon a release from his engagement. So extreme had been his terror from this cause, that he had been unable to sleep or to eat, and even threatened to poison himself to get rid of his anxiety. Two others, however, were soon obtained, who remained.

Mr. Webster gave an account of a visit to the country seat of a gentleman which he visited, about two miles above Canton. It contained several houses, connected by wooden bridges, and all built upon piles in a low marshy spot. The building were of two stories, and had handsome apartments, very neatly furnished. In the rear was a theatre and between the two a fish pond. On nights of performance the place is lighted by lanterns upon long poles stuck into the mud at the bottom of the pond. An aviary, some deer, monkeys, &c. were kept upon the premises, but there were no gardens or grounds. About fifty women with small feet, came to see the strange visitors. They were all dressed in silks, with vests and trousers like the Turks. They manifested as much surprise at the small *waists* of our ladies as we did at their small feet, and inquired with equal anxiety if they were not thus compressed with great pain

The Chinese have the art of dwarfing trees, and will cultivate a pear or apple tree, perfect in all its parts, and yet not exceeding a foot in height; and what is still more strange, they will raise from them at pleasure, fruit either of the usual size, or of a size proportioned to the diminished growth of the tree.

At Canton there are displayed elegant articles of luxury and beauty in the greatest profusion. A passer through the streets is constantly in danger of loosing an eye, or being knocked down, by the bamboos on which Coolies carry their burdens; for no beast of burden, except the boffaloes to plough the rice fields, is known in Southern China, the population being too dense to supply them food. Everything is done by human labor. There are no wheeled vehicles, except wagons driven by sails in the northern part of the Empire: and the Chinese use no milk.

The beggars of China are very wretched and very numerous, though less so than would be supposed. China has no asylums, and of course all paupers who obtain relief do it by begging. They go about the streets, with a gong or some other discordant instrument, or at least with a harsh and unpleasant voice. They enter a shop and without leaving off, as Hamlet recommends, their "damnable faces," they commence a noise which forthwith drives all customers from the premises. This is allowed by law and custom and is continued until it produces some gratuity. If the shopkeeper be blessed with fortitude, the beggar beats his gong till he is tired, lies down by the counter and sleeps awhile and then resumes his beating. He keeps it up until he has aggravated the keeper to the requisite amount. Begging is thus a trial of patience;—the one strives to annoy and the other to endure; and it continues till one of the two gives up.

The government of China is patriarchal—a pure, unalloyed despotism. The Czar of Russia is less absolute than the Chinese Emperor. The soil of all China is his: he lives, property and honor of the people are in his hands: he is to them the Sun of Heaven—the source of law and religion and is invested with every attribute of power and sovereignty. The Empire is divided into provinces; each province into districts, and the districts into towns, villages and hundreds. Each officer of each division is responsible to his immediate superior. Crimes or accidents are punished not only upon those by whom they are committed, but those also by whom they should have been prevented. In any serious disturbance in a town, the authorities of the district and the province in which it is situated are punished in various degrees. Families are held responsible for the behaviour of each member of them. It seems to us cruel to punish a family for the offence of one, or to ravage a district for a crime of some of its inhabitants. But the theory is that all the members of the empire are bound to preserve order and peace, and are responsible for its infraction; as in England and this country, where towns are held liable for property destroyed by mobs. And in China this theory is never allowed to become a dead letter, and harsh as it may seem, it cannot be denied that experience has approved it of wonderful efficacy in the preservation of quiet and tranquility.

Mr. Webster related one incident to illustrate its operation. In passing through a dense crowd, in the night, an American was robbed of his watch. Of course it was impossible to identify the offender, but he made his complaint to the Mandarin, who told him that in three days his watch should be returned. That very day all the police officers of Canton, one or two hundred in number, were arrested; and one of them was brought before the Mandarin and told that *all the rest* would be kept in close confinement until the watch should be returned. Each of these officers had a family dependant upon him for support.—Each had numerous friends interested in his welfare; and each of these had other friends whom they could easily enlist in his behalf. The whole population of Canton was thus converted into a police force. Every man woman and child became a thief-taker; and the result was that on the third day the watch was found in an obscure hut, twenty miles from Canton, and forthwith restored to its owner. In another instance where silver coin had been stolen in a house-theft, all the servants were seized and bamboozed until one confessed the theft.

With these references to the actual working of the government slaves of China, Mr Webster closed his lecture, of which we have given a very imperfect and inadequate, but we hope intelligible sketch. It was very able, and elegantly written, and was listened to with the deepest attention. He will resume the subject to-morrow evening.

MY LUCK.

By ROBT. HOWE GOULD, ESQ., OF CONNECTICUT.

I know that I am celebrated! I do not blush to confess it. It's not my fault;—I cannot help it! I am perfectly aware that I am chronicled in story, invoked in song, and immortalized in comedy. I know you have heard of me ten thousand times;—but I am not to blame—"its my luck!"

There never lived a man who naturally and instinctively shrunk from fame with so much sensitiveness as myself—yet thus I have had it thrust upon me.—I can only repeat—"it's my infernal luck!"

I cannot endure this state of things any longer. It must "burst out" in regard to my sufferings; there must be something done, or I shall certainly go mad!

I'll call a public meeting—I'll appeal to the Legislature—I'll change my name—I'll get a divorce from this cursed fate that follows me. I know I'm excited; I feel it. But, confound it? what else can you expect! Indeed I need your indulgence, —I want your sympathy, *sympathy!* Why I never met with such a thing in my life, except from one individual, and he died the next day.

But it is not sufficient that I am miserable. I am not allowed to luxuriate quietly in my own wretchedness, & wrap my miseries around me, as they were widow's weeds. My woes are dragged before the public: my own private sorrows are made the theme of general mirth. My agonies are considered to be most laughable comicalities. I have myself seen a thousand people grinning, hyena-like, over the wretchedness of Guy Goodluck, as portrayed by some inhuman wretch of a comedian. That diabolical farce, that identical petite comedy, is the veritable transcript of a few brief pages, extracted at random from the record of my life. I was the victim of the machination of that "d—d, infernal diabolical John Jones!" I am "that rash and most unfortunate man," therein styled, with facetious bitterness, Guy *Good* luck.

Sir, I have expressed a wish to draw upon your sympathy; and I wish to convince you that I need and deserve it. If the narrative which I hereunto append does not serve as a letter of credit authorising an unlimited draft;—if your ear, open to others, should be deaf to me, I can only repeat—"it's just my luck."

A few years since, I commenced a tour through the States, and it is to the incidents of that tour that I would ask your attention; firmly convinced that when you have perused the painful history, you will unhesitatingly accord to me that distinctive appellation—"*The* unfortunate man."

I left New York for Charleston South Carolina, in a vessel recommended as a fast sailer, on a Friday in preference to waiting until the following Monday for the steam-packet. This ship's voyage for three years previous, had averaged something less than *five days*; but I was on board, *my* interests were involved, and the vessel was driven off the coast by a tremendous gale; thus five weeks elapsed before we reached Charleston, minus the mizen-mast and fore-top-mast, & in a state of incipient starvation:—

"Just my luck!"

Leaving Charleston in a week, I took the morning railroad train for Augusta, Georgia. Should have been in Augusta between four and five o'clock P. M. Locomotive broke down, obliging us to walk five miles in a drenching rain; and we did not arrive until two the next morning. Hotels all closed—no beds, except "the soft side of a plank" at the depot.

Next day made my way to a hotel.—The weather being fine and warm, they gave me a room without any fire-place, and looking due north through three large windows. That afternoon an influx of travellers filled the house; so that they had not a square inch of room to spare—and *then* the weather changed! The next three were the only really cold days that had visited Augusta in five years.

Of course I took a cold that stuck by me for the next six months;—

"Just my luck!"

Left Augusta in the stage coach for Florida, at seven o'clock, on as fine an evening as ever was seen. Before ten, it ere came down such a rain as had not been seen since the days of the patriarch Noah; in the midst of which the coach capsized in the woods and we spent nearly the whole remainder of the night *al fresco*, in getting again under way. Road in wet garments till breakfast time, and then, it being late, no time was allowed to change them, but we were obliged to ride on undried; in a predicament, and undergoing a process of evaporation, only to be appreciated by a victim of Priessnitz. Pushed on all that day and another night, without any respite; came to a river, (the Ogeeechee,) where for twenty years, there had been a bridge strong enough to withstand all freshets, but I wanted to cross it, it had been washed during the previous night. After some delay, we put ourselves into a crazy concert of a flat boat, and crossed, coach and all. In the course of this operation my hat was knocked overboard and lost, and I was compelled to perform the remainder of my journey in a night-cap. At length we reached the Chatahoochie river, on the confines of Florida; a steam-boat had passed half an hour before our arrival, and no other expected for a week. Before the week expired the river had fallen so low as not to be navigable.

"Just my luck!"

Took land conveyance for Pensacola in Florida; went about forty miles, and was obliged to turn back by a sudden outbreak of the Indians. Circumstances, growing out of this cause, increased the term of additional detention to about three weeks. Reached Mobile *eventually*, though every en miles of the way had required from me about three hours more for their accomplishment than they would from any one else. Two steamboats left Mobile for New Orleans at the same hour; I embarked on board the *fastest*, sure to arrive two hours sooner than the other. Our engine got out of order, and the slow boat beat us by half a day. I had a wager pending with a fellow passenger that we should beat her by an hour!

Went to a hotel in New Orleans. Crowded—but could give *me* a fine room; the only objection being that the key was lost; —that, however, should be replaced in the morning. Spent the evening very pleasantly; retired for once in my life, in high spirits. Awoke the next morning, minus a pair of inexpressibles & all my cash!

"Just my luck!"

Having by some unusual conjunction of fortunate circumstances, letters of credit, and not having happened to lose them I succeeded in reclothing my nether limbs and relining my pockets;—and in a state bordering on frenzy, I rushed on board a steam boat bound up the Mississippi.

The boat was the *ill fated Oronoco!*

After enduring all the horrors of the scene of death consequent upon the fearful explosion on board that "ill-starred perfidious bark." I escaped from her at Vicksburg, landed, and went to the principal hotel. That very night "the great fire" broke out, consuming the whole square on which the hotel stood. I escaped with the loss of my baggage. Owing to exposure, fright and fatigue, I was attacked the next day with a bilious fever, which kept me a prisoner for six weeks!—

"Just my luck!"

The fever finally "evacuated;" and salivated, scorched, and worn to a skeleton —more dead than alive—I started for the Red River, in the vain hope that on the extreme verge of civilization my infernal 'luck' might desert me. Twas a vain attempt! After that "jumping-off-place of all creation," *Shreveport*, was left behind (being more than six hundred miles up that wild stream, the Red River, and just as I began to indulge the fondest anticipations, the boat struck a snag in "the great raft," and sunk in twenty minutes.

There being no other steam boat at that time up the river, we were obliged to take small boats and go down, drifting with the current by day, and sleeping on shore (with the snakes, alligators and musquitoes) by night. Arrived, after a week of this tedious voyaging at Natchitoches, and there got on board a small steam boat and continued our downward course. The river being at flood the boat ran into the wood and knocked down both her chimneys. They fell overboard and sunk! We lay by for a day, and built *wooden chimneys* out of some planks which were found piled on the shore. Thought them rather combustible; but the captain has used similar ones frequently with perfect success. So we started; ran merrily for about ten miles. Why not twenty or fifty? I was on board. The confounded chimneys took fire and were consumed, the boat herself having a narrow escape!

"Just my luck!"

By some means or other, I hardly know what, I reached Cincinnati Ohio. Met there an old friend; one of my *few* real friends. "After all my troubles and torments," thought I, "this is one happiness beyond the reach of fate!"—but *he* was going to New Orleans the same day!—This however I made the best of. He had taken passage in a beautiful new boat. This was to be her first trip; and willing to give the citizens a treat, her captain invited the friends of the passengers to remain on board, and he would run two or three miles up the river, and land them as he again passed the pier on his way down.—We remained on board. I remained. The boat ran two or three miles up the stream, turned, and when nearly at the wharf again, a fearful explosion was heard:—the shattered fragments of the *Missetle* were scattered upon the stream and shores of the Ohio!

My woes were not to end thus. Happening to *wish* to be killed, such an event was an impossibility. I was rescued from the water perfectly uninjured.

"Just my luck!"

Some time elapsed. I went to Canada. I joined the "patriots." Now, thought I linked with men as desperate as myself, I may at least bring my sorrows to a speedy termination. Every thing worked in unison with my hopes. I was taken prisoner in arms! I was tried at *London, U. Canada* and sentenced to be hanged! The day arrived; I stood upon the scaffold; the fatal noose was placed around my neck, already I seemed to have advanced one step into the other world. Just as I was expecting the irrevocable signal for the executioner to launch me forth, a reprieve arrived from Sir George Arthur! This was followed by a free pardon! My happiness in prospect of the close of my career was considered proof positive of insanity. Some persons curious in monomania had obtained my release!

I was sent out of the province, of course. I took the stage for Detroit, in Michigan. The stage proprietors were in the habit of shortening their route some seventy miles, by traversing the ice on Lake Saint Clair. We took the same course in the present instance. A strong north-west gale came on, and the ice began to break up. We were obliged to make for the shore with all our speed, and eventually to abandon the horses and coach & clamber over the broken ice to the land. Two fellow passengers were drowned. My perfect indifference preserved me, and I landed in safety.

I arrived at Detroit. Some prospect existing of disturbance on the frontier, I enlisted in the United States' army. I wanted to be *shot*,—instead of which I froze my toes and received a flogging for sleeping while on sentry duty. I never *can* sleep. Not even in a stage-coach or railway car. Never could—always, under all circumstances, restless and wakeful. It was essential for me to keep awake, and of course, I went to sleep like a *hog!* I got flogged—*I* for *sleeping!*

A fellow-soldier committed a contemptible piece petty of larceny. I was convicted of the deed, flogged again, and drummed out of my regiment!

"Just my luck!"

I came again to New York. Eventually I determined to commit suicide.—I bought a pistol. I loaded it. I went to my room and put it to my head,—*as I thought!* I did nothing of the sort! I missed my mark by six inches, and utterly demolished a very expensive mantle clock, and an heir-loom in my landlady's family.

"Just my luck!"

It is cold,—you know it is cold,—infernally cold! Many instances have occurred of people being killed by a mere plunge into the river in such weather. I rushed to the wharf—I plunged into the water. "Now," exclaimed I triumphantly, "save me who can!"

A venerable watchman, who ought to have been fast asleep, (and had been so at the same hour from time immemorial,) saw me,—had me picked up!

I was floating on a cake of ice,—had been in the water for half an hour! I ought to have been dead some ten minutes before I was taken out. Any other man would have died twice in the same time. Never better in the whole course of my life than I was the next morning.

"Just my luck!"

I have been writing these painful details from an inkstand as big as a half-bushel, with a base as broad as that of Mount

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