EASTON GAZETTE.

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The Blind Squatter.

From Chambers' Journal.

Nearly four hundred miles up the Trinity river, Texas at the extreme point to which the flat-bottom steamboats run up in search of cotton and other productions, is Robbins' Ferry. Below, the river is narrow, with high steep banks, within the deep shadow of which the waters roll noiselessly and swiftly towards the ocean, while groves of somewhat stunted trees run down to the very edge of the cliffs: here, however, the stream expands into a broad and shallow lake the shores of which are low, and even unsightly, as is generally the case in Texas.

We arrived at a landing-place three miles below the junction of the lake and river late one night, and early the following morning I was paddling up against the stream in a light bark canoe, which having but a slight hold in the water, served better to stem the current than one of larger dimensions. For some time I continued within the shadows of the cliffs in comparative gloom; but after a somewhat fatiguing hour my eye first caught a glimpse of the shadow lake where I hoped to find sufficient abundance of wild fowl to glut my most murderous appetite as a sportsman. The dawn had long since passed, but nature appeared yet asleep, so calm, so still was that almost untrodden spot. Gliding swiftly out of the influence of the current, I allowed my canoe to stand motionless, while I gazed around. Far as the eye could reach, spread a perfect wilderness of waters forward to the right and to the left, perfectly unruffled, for not so much as a blade of grass or a leaf was stirring on the shore. Here and there rose huge trunks of trees, borne from above by the almost periodical inundations and which, reaching some shallow part, became stationary, until time and decay removed them by degrees from their resting place. Snags were visible all around, while a low bushy island lay about a quarter of a mile to the southward. The waters sparkled in the sun, revealing at some distance the presence of hundreds of ducks, geese, and swans floating upon the surface. For some time they remained unheeded, so charmed was I by the quiet beauty of the landscape; but at length the prospect of a late breakfast awoke my killing propensities, and, raising my paddle, I gave a true Indian sweep, and glided noiselessly towards the little island above alluded to.

My progress was rapid, but not a sound could have been detected by any save an aboriginal. The bevy of ducks which had drawn me in that direction was sailing towards the island, and I was within gunshot long before I was perceived, as, the better to deceive them, I lay almost on my face at, last and paddled with my hands. At length I allowed the canoe to drift with whatever impulse it had previously received, and cautiously clutching my double-barreled apology for a Joe Manton rose in the boat. Ere, however, I could gain my feet, crack! crack! went the two barrels of a fowling piece, a whistling was heard close to my ears; and the ducks, save and except a few victims flew away with a loud rustling of wings. I was astounded. My first impulse was to return the fire at random, as the idea of Indians crossed my brain. I could, however, plainly detect the presence of a fowling piece by the peculiar report, while it was clear the ducks had been the object aimed at. Still the proximity of the lead to my ears was far from pleasant, and I hastened to prevent a recurrence of so dangerous an experiment—"Hallo! friend," cried I in a loud and somewhat angry voice, "are you duck-shooting or man shooting because I should like to know?" A man rose instantly above the bushes. 'Merciful Heaven, cried he, 'have I wounded you sir? Come in, I will explain this accident."

I readily complied, and a few minutes placed me beside the sportsman. I at once saw that he was blind. Nearly six feet high, thin, even gaunt, he presented a most remarkable appearance. Clothed in the ordinary garb of a backwoodsman there was yet an intellectuality, and even nobility of character in his features, which struck me forcibly, while the sightless orbs at once revealed the cause of what had nearly proved a fatal accident. "You are not alone?" said I, glancing curiously around the bushes. "I am," said he, with a smile, "quite alone. But let me most sincerely beg your pardon for having endangered your life." "No excuses," said I, depositing the victims of his volley at his feet; "but if you would explain to me how you are here alone, & how being here you are thus employed, you will assuage a very strong feeling of curiosity." "With pleasure,'" he replied, "I owe you an explanation; and besides," he continued, "I believe we are countrymen, and this meeting gives me true delight." "I am an Englishman," I said. "And I a Scotchman. In Britain it makes us countrymen; in a strange land it makes us brothers.

Struck by the blind man's manner, I loaded, prairie fashion, a couple of corncob pipes with excellent leaf tobacco, and handing him one seated myself quietly by his side. Closing his eyes, from habit, as if to read the past, he was silent for a few moments. "My name is Campbell," he said at length, without further preface, "and by trade I am a cabinet maker. To begin at the beginning. When I was twenty, and that is not so long ago as you may think, I received an offer to go to N. York. I was engaged to be married to a sweet cousin of mine. Poor Ellen! I could not go without her, and yet it was they said, ower young to marry. Still the offer was good, and rather than I should lose the opportunity of advancing myself they all consented it should be a wedding. The day after our happy union we sailed for the far west.

"We reached New York in safety; I entered upon my employment with a firm & settled determination to secure, if not fortune at least competence. Wages were in those days very high; I was a good workman; my master had confidence in me, and besides my wages as journeyman, paid me a salary as his foreman and clerk. As determined to lose no opportunity of advancement, I kept all his books after my regular day's work was done. I saved more than half my earnings, and was as happy, I believe, as an industrious honest man can be; and if he, sir, cannot be happy, I know not who can. "You are right," said I; "an honest, sober, industrious working man, with ample employment, respected by his master, with a little family around him, should be the happiest of created beings. His wants are all supplied, without the cares and troubles of wealth." "So it was with me; I was very happy. At the end of ten years I had saved a large sum, and then, and only then, my wife presented me with my first and only child.

"With the consent, and by the advise even of my employers, who had my true interests at heart, I determined to start in business for myself; but not in New York. New Orleans was a money-making, busy place, and thither I removed. My success was unexpectedly great; my own workmanship was eagerly bought up, and I employed many men at the enormous wages of the south. Two misfortunes, however, now clouded my felicity; both attributable, I fear, to my desire for independence. The south did not agree with my wife, and ere I could restore her to a genial climate, she died. Sir, my sorrow was the sorrow, I hope of a man and a Christian; but I felt it sorely. He only who has seen wife or child removed from him by death, can estimate my feelings. Existence for a time was a blank. I worked mechanically, but no more did her cheerful voice encourage my labors. I ate, I drank; ah, sir! it was then I missed her; at the morning meal, at dinner, over the tea board. As my eyes rested on the empty chair on the opposite side of my little table, I could see in it the accustomed form; and then my heart seemed to turn cold, and the very blood cease to flow. He who has not lost a wife or child, knows not real sorrow in this world. It is the severest trial man ever is put to.—Well, sir, she died, and I was left alone with a little image of herself, my Ellen.—A gayer, happier being never lived—always smiling, always singing. In time, she brought back some glimpse of joy to my soul.

"One morning I awoke with a peculiar sensation at my heart—I had caught the yellow fever. I will not detail the history of this illness. Suffice, that it was three months ere I was restored to health; and then, by some extraordinary accident, it proved that I was blind; while my business was gone from me. I knew not what to do. You know, sir, the usual course of ruined men in New Orleans: they sell off secretly, shut their shutters, write G. T. T. (Gone to Texas) on the door, and are no more heard of. But I, sir, could not do this. I was, however, no longer fit for business: a quiet retreat in the woods was my best course of proceeding. Besides, my health was shattered, and I should not have lived in New Orleans. Accordingly, I contrived to raise a thousand dollars when I wound up my accounts, and with this and a negro slave, I and my child started for Texas. Blind, I was not fit to cope with men, and my object, therefore, was to retire, as far as was consistant with safety, into the woods.

"Eight years ago, I journeyed up this river, and reached this very spot. Francisco, my negro, was a devoted and faithful fellow, and worked hard, because I was a good master to him. We erected a hut upon yonder shore: it was a laborious operation; but it was at length completed. I have said I was a cabinet-maker: so was my negro; we therefore furnished the place elegantly for a backwoods dwelling.

"Now to speak of my daughter. When we left New Orleans, she was eight years old, and up to that age had been educated most carefully, her existence being, of course, that of a town girl. You know, sir, the lazy luxurious habits of the pestilential city, and how little they fit one for roughing life in the woods. Well Nelly was transplanted hither, preserving and increasing her accomplishments, and yet has she become a perfect prairie bird. Her fingers ply the rude needle required to make these coarse garments: she and Francisco prepare them for use. We have a female slave, Francisco's wife but hers is out door work; and Nelly makes butter, cooks, ay, sir, and even cleans. And she is quite happy, singing all day long; and if an hour can be found for a book, she is in paradise.

"Singular as it may seem, I do most of the hunting: at all events, all the wild-fowl shooting. With the dawn I am up; and in my dug-out, which I pull, while Nelly steers, I land here, and conceal myself in these bushes, while she returns to prepare breakfast. With the loss of my sight I have gained an additional strength of hearing. I can detect immediately the approach of the ducks and geese on the water, and if once they come near enough, am sure not to waste my powder and shot. After about a couple of hours she returns for me. Her time is now nearly up: you shall see her, and breakfast at New Edinburgh."

At this instant a diminutive sail caught my eye at a distance of a hundred yards.—Rising, I perceived a small canoe gliding before a slight breeze which had arisen, & rapidly approaching. The foresail and mainsail concealed its occupant; but presently a melodious voice was heard carolling a merry ditty.

"There is my child," said Campbell, his voice hushed to a whisper; "there is my child. I never hear her sing but I see her mother before me."

"Well, father," cried Nelly taking in her little sail: "no ducks for me to pick up: not one. You are unlucky this morning."

At this moment she caught sight of my naval uniform, and stopped short. "This gentleman was kind enough to pick them up for me, and you must give him a seat in the boat"

Nelly approached. Though tanned by the sun, one could still see the blue-eyed Scotch girl in her. Light curls fell from beneath a vast straw hat over her shoulders, while a simple fur pelisse, and buckskin mocassins, with red worsted stockings was all her visible attire. But never had I seen anything more graceful or more elegant. A woman and yet a girl, she had evidently the feelings of the first, with the joyous artlessness of the second. We were friends directly.

In a few minutes more we were sailing for the shore, and in a quarter of an hour were in a sight of New Edinburgh. To my surprise I discovered a substantial log hut, several outhouses, Indian cornfields, while pumkins, &c., flourished around in abundance. Two cows were grazing in the neighborhood; as many horses were near them; while pigs and fowls were scattered in all directions. I was amazed, the bland Scotchman's industry was so novel in Texas. I expressed my surprise.—"Eight years of perseverance can do much," said Campbell quietly: "thank Heaven I am very happy, and my Nelly will not be left a beggar." "But you must find her a steady, hard working young fellow for a husband," replied I, "to preserve all this."—"I think," said he, smiling, "if you were to ask Nelly, she would tell you that that was done already." The slightly heightened color of the maiden was her only answer, and at that moment we reached the landing, where the negro couple and their pickaninnies were standing. The slaves were sleek and hearty, and showed their white teeth merrily.

Campbell led the way to the house, which was for Texas, superabundantly furnished. Comfort was everywhere, and abundance. The breakfast was, to a hunter, delicious, consisting of coffee, hot corncakes, venison steaks, and wild honey, while a cold turkey graced the centre of the board. What I enjoyed, however better even than the breakfast was the attention of the daughter to her blind father.—He seated himself at the board, and Nelly having first helped me, supplied all his wants with a care and watchfulness which was delightful to behold. She anticipated all his desires, her whole soul being seemingly bent to give him pleasure. She was in fact, more like a mother with a child, than a daughter with a father in the prime of life. Breakfast concluded, we talked again of his history, particularly since his arrival in Texas.

The routine of the day was simple enough, as they explained to me. The negroes overlooked by the father and daughter, worked in the fields from dawn until six in the evening, the father fashioning some rural implement, an axe or plough handle, while the daughter plied her needle. They breakfasted at half-past six; dined at half past eleven, and supped at six; after this last meal, Nelly generally read to her father for two hours. Their library was good, including several standard works & the four first volumes of "Chambers' Edinburgh Journal."

Cambell went out into the air after a while to talk to the negroes, and I was left alone with Nelly. I took advantage of his absence to learn more of her character. Never was I more delighted. Not a regret, not a wish for the busy world of which she read so much: while it was quite clear to me that her lover, whoever he was, had only succeeded by promising to reside with the father. To leave her blind parent seemed to her one of those impossibilities which scarcely even suggested itself to her mind. Yes! Nelly Campbell was a sweet creature, perhaps the only true romantic recollection I bore with me from Texas.

I remained with them all day: I visited their whole farm; I examined Nelly's favorite retreat, in a grove at the rear of the house, and then I left them. We parted with a regret which was mutual: a regret which, strange to say, was quite painful on my side, and I never saw them again—Still I did not lose sight of them. I always wrote by the steamer to Nelly; and many a long letter did I obtain in reply. More and more did I discover that she was a daughter only, and that even a husband must for a time hold a second place in her heart. At length she wrote—"And now, sir, I am married, and I am very happy, though I almost sometimes regret the step, as I can no longer give my whole time to my dear blind father. He is, however, so happy himself, that I must resign myself to be less his nurse, especially as the only quarrel John and I ever have, is as to who shall wait on him. If he has lost part of his daughter, he has found a son." This picture of happiness made me thoughtful and I owned that, great as is the blessing of civilization, and vast and grand as are the benefits of communion with your fellows, a scene of felicity might yet be found in the woods. Though I am a strong lover of mankind, & wish to be among them, and to enjoy the advantages of civilization, yet do I think, if I were an old blind man, I would be a backwood squatter, with a daughter such as Nelly.

I heard no more from them, as I soon after returned to England, and the busy life of the world and other avocations have always prevented me writing. Should I, however, revisit Texas, my first care will be to run up the Trinity, and once more enjoy hospitality at the table of the BLIND SQUATTER.

Frontier Life.

THE LOST CHILD.

We doubt whether, among the whole catalogue of fictions and mawkish tales—got up and paid for by the publishers to the hired contributors—can be found within the embossed and gilded covers of the numerous annuals which adorn the parlor table of our fashionables, a single *fiction* of such simple and thrilling *interest* as the following account *of the* hunt for a "Lost Child," by a correspondent of the St. Louis Weekly Gazette—in one of the frontier settlements of the west:

About ten o'clock in the morning, was heard a loud shout at the gate—"Ho Mr. W. ho!" "What's wanting?" "O, Larry's boy is lost—little Johnny!" This was enough to secure a father's aid; and on he rode to shout the same at every door he passed. Little Johnny! said I, and my heart burst forth at the very sound. If was a fair and lovely child, Johnny, and had a gentle and affectionate mother, with an ardent and sacrificing love which few mothers ever feel. His father was a bold hunter—his horses and hound and rifle had more of his heart than all the world besides: but little Johnny nestled there, indeed he was a great pet with the neighbors, and won more caresses and more sympathy than all the rest of the children together.

Such appeals are always sovereign; but few, perhaps, have ever met with more quick or general response—everybody turned out—the news flew like lightning, and men and boys for ten miles around came to assist in the search, while women and children were running to and fro, and hailing every passer by, to learn the progress of the work. Never before, I may dare say, was there such a neighborly union as now pervaded the motley mass—the same gush of sympathy, the same fearful apprehension, and the same images of death and woe, pervaded every home and heart. It seemed as if one vast cloud of gloom enwrapped the region round, from which shone out, in lurid glare, and to which every eye was turned, and every pulse beat true—the lost child!

Little Johnny was about four years old he had been out in the field with his father and the black man, who were harvesting corn—had filled his little bag with corn, and had started for home about 2 o'clock P. M.—On returning at night, they ascertained that the child had never been seen. It was nearly dark, but the alarm was given; some 15 or 20 neighbors took their horns and commenced the search. The corn, were he was last seen, was the first object, of course; here they took single rows and scoured in vain. They then scattered through the wood—the frantic father often called out in a voice of thunder.

Ho! John—ho! John—O, John!"—Then fearing the boy might be alarmed and afraid to answer, he would soften down into the gentle, winning tone of the fire-side—"Johnny, Johnny my dear, father's come!"

It was a cloudy evening; and though perhaps, he had never bowed the knee "before Jehovah's awful throne," he prayed the Lord it might not rain that night. The air was damp and chilly, so that if the child were alive, with his bare feet and light jacket, he must be suffering cruelly from cold. But the wolves! ah, this was the fear, this the terror, which all felt, none dared to breathe. A wolf had been prowling around the premises—indeed they had a common path across the prairie—and the point where several beside myself had heard the cries of distress was a famous haunt for them; even in the midst of their anxious search, a distant growl would now and then burst upon the ear, picturing forth the den, the cubs, the—

The dogs were very eager in the field especially the wolf dogs. Winder one of the best, would run no other trail. O'Larry knew this, and watched with intense anxiety, his every move. He scents—he runs; "Oh, my God, he's got my boy!"—He leaps from his horse, he sees the foot prints of his own dear Johnny in the gopher hill by his side—he tracks him to the wood, and off from Winder's trail—ah, he breathes again!

The search was continued till midnight when a part thought best to relieve their horses and wait for day light to begin afresh. But the father with three of his hunting friends, who had resolved not to eat or sleep till they had found the boy, still kept on—sometimes riding sometimes walking—calling and shouting if for no other purpose than to keep the wolves at bay. At length they stationed themselves within hearing distance of each other, and sat down to protect the child, or rush to his rescue, in case they should hear him attacked, to watch until the morning.

At early dawn, about 50 new horsemen arrived and the search commenced anew. The field was examined for the track, which was pursued with some doubt, as he had been there three successive days.—On tracing the path which led towards the wolf woods, the imprints of Johnny's little feet were again discovered, as he appeared to be running and the mark of his bag dragged along by his side. Here the fathers anguish gushed anew, as the fears of the preceding night were justified and corroborated—They now agreed to take a station of about 15 rods abreast, go up one side of the branch and down the other till the whole surface of the extensive area farther than he could possibly have travelled had been explored. They had completed one side and were returning, when the signal was given—Johnny was found! The noisy shouting, and repeated peals of the hunter's horns, soon grouped the solemn cavalcade.

But O'Larry, through foremost in the hunt, fell back at the first note of the summoning horn, nor *did he* speak a word, or *scarcely* breathe, till he snatched his own Johnny from the arms of his delighted bearer, and pressed him with a frantic fondness to his now bursting heart. The dear boy was found about two miles from home, in a thicket of hazel, picking filberts with his bag of corn still on his arm. He looked bright and happy, and when asked where he was going, said he was going home, but it was so far. He said he had'nt seen any body, but he heard some one call him, and that he was afraid; that he ran till he was very tired, and then he laid his head down on his bag and cried—that while he was crying, he saw a big carriage go by with candles in it, (the thunder and lightning) and then it grew very dark, and he asked God to take care of little Johnny, and went to sleep. He seemed amazed to see so many around him, all so glad to see him.

A PERILOUS SLEIGH RIDE.

The Albany Journal relates an amusing story of a catastrophe which happened to a mail sleigh and its passengers about a fortnight since, and which abundantly proves the force of the declaration, "all's well that ends well.' The whole account is too long for our columns, but we have endeavered materially to condense it.

It was evening, and the mail sleigh, four in hand, from Binghamton to Utica, drove away on a ride of fifty miles from Norwich to Utica.

The passengers were four in number, three gentlemen and one lady, called to Utica, by indispensable business. They were unknown to each other, but were destined, as the sequel showed, to become acquainted by an unexpected event.

Nothing occurred of moment until about three o'clock in the morning, when the sky became suddenly overcast, snow fell; and a Northwester set in, which increasing every moment, soon blew a heavy gale, enveloping, at intervals, the sleigh and team in a cloud of snow, and driving its sprinklings on the passengers, who were seated inside of a large deal box cover, with oil-skin curtains at the entrance.

It was soon apparent that the track was filling up, and had become very heavy; the movement of four fine horses was slow and labored, and the sleigh rolled and its joints and knees creaked like those of a vessel in a stormy sea.

The moon had now set, and nothing could be seen of the road but the top rails of the fences. No body spoke a word, but all felt that a catastrophe was at hand. The team now bolted, & the driver a first rate fellow, & fitted for any emergency, requested the gentlemen to alight, as "she was fast in a snow drift." They were soon out in four feet of snow. The team then started, and after wading some fifty yards the gentlemen resumed their seats.

They had proceeded but a little farther when, with a bound and a lurch, the sleigh heeled over and capsized down a slope, the lady being unfortunately undermost.—The thermometer stood at 18 deg. below zero, and attempts to right the fallen vehicle were impossible; the passengers were benumbed by the cold, and in an awkward dilemma. A consultation, however, was held, and it was resolved to take refuge in the first habitation that could be reached. But true to American instinct, sympathy for the helpless and distressed, the lady was not overlooked; she was carefully extricated from the sleigh, and placed in charge of one of the party, who pledged himself to conduct her to a place of safety. The driver mounting one of his wheel horses, plunged with his team into the snow, bound to Parish Hill post office, some two miles off, and the two younger passengers—the whole party being ignorant of the difficulties to be encoutered, or they would not have separated—started for the near house, supposed to be about a half a mile off; they found it a long one.

The lady and her conductor were now alone, and the gentleman, over his knees in snow introduced himself as J. S. V. of the city of Albany, the lady, in no better plight, announced herself to be Miss R. of Norwich, Chenango county.

The prospect around was cheering enough. The ignorance of Mr. V. P. localities—the darkness—the intense cold—the boundless waste of deep and trackless snow—the great distance to the nearest dwelling—and the certainty that assistance would come until day light, two hours off—were stern realities which were to be met and overcome.

To regain the sleigh was the first suggestion, but to do it was now impossible. Its only entrance was at the top of the cover, and that was above her head. To climb up the smooth side was impracticable, and encumbered as she was with clothing, and sunk in the snow, to lift her was beyond the power of one man; besides she recoiled from taking shelter in the dark cavernous hold. To advance, then was the only alternative. Mr. V. P. proposed it to her—she consented at once.

Forward was the word, and she was deep into a heavy mass of snow which lay directly across the road. She struggled along through this some ten rods and then sank down helplessly fixed. The conductor was at hand, however, to encourage her with his voice, and raised her by the aid of his hands. She was soon started & again under way. Another ten rods were passed and again she became fixed, and was again relieved, and so on and again, and again. And such was the process until some half hour had elapsed, and a quarter of a mile was gone over.

Matters now became serious; the lady was nearly exhausted, she spoke with a faltering voice, breathed hard, and panted like a deer run down by the hounds. A dead stop for many minutes, was now unavoidable.

It was at this crisis that a candle shone from a distant window, announcing the arrival of the other passengers at the more accessible dwelling. Its effect on Miss R. was electrical; it reanimated her drooping energies, and she proceeded with renewed strength. One or two more struggels and the drift was passed. The snow was still knee deep, but the footing was firm and even.

A half hour more brought them to the house of Mr. Simmons, twelve miles south of Utica, where they were received in the kindest manner.

At daylight the driver rallied the neighbors, whose sturdy arms soon righted the overturn, and shortly after breakfast the sleigh drove up. The passengers resumed their seats, and arrived at Utica some five hours after the usual time, not much the worse, except the lady's hands, for the adventure in the snow drift. In the confusion of the overturn, she had dropped her gloves from her muff, and steadily refusing to use those of her protector, which were gallantly offered, she contended with naked hands against the icy element, well exhibiting a generous and grateful nature.

Dr. Buckland on the Potato Disease.—The gangrene was, doubtless, caused by the wet summer, and he had little doubt, that unless remedies were applied to stop the progress of the disease, it would end in the total destruction of the potato.—There were, however, cures which, if properly applied, would render the potatoes perfectly harmless. If the potatoes infected were first of all steeped for twelve hours in cold water, the water then changed, and they were then peeled, and steeped for another twelve hours before being boiled, (which they ought to be in two new waters,) they would be found to be perfectly wholesome and nutritious. When steeped or macerated as described, they were perfectly innocuous to man or beast.

The Price of Hearts—A Danish jury recently returned a verdict of 2,000 rix dollars damage to a girl who had been wronged under a promise of marriage.—From this it appears that hearts are valued higher in Denmark than in Jersey, but not so high as in Maryland, as recent decisions say a Jersey heart is worth 1,000, and a Maryland heart 2,500 dollars.

A New Englander, riding in a railroad car, off southwest, somewhere, seemed particularly disposed to astonish the other passengers with tough stories about Yankeedom. At last he mentioned that one of his neighbors owned an immense dairy and made a million pounds of butter and a million pounds of cheese yearly. The story produced some sensation, and the Yankee perceiving that his veracity was in danger of being questioned, appealed to a friend as follows:

"True, ins't it, Mr. P———? I speak of Deacon Brown—you know Deacon Brown?"

"Ye-e-s," replied the friend—that is, yes I know Deacon Brown, though I don't know as I ever heard how many pounds of butter and cheese he makes a year, but I know he has twelve sawmills that all go by buttermilk!"

Great Britain has 45 war steamers built, and 29 bulding. This exclusive of guard vessels, &c., for coast service only.

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